

2018

# The Relationship between Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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James B. Bright

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Walden University  
2018

Abstract

The Relationship between Transformational Leadership Behaviors and

Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent

by

James B. Bright

MS, Air War College, 2005

BS, Middle Tennessee State University, 1984

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Industrial & Organizational Psychology

Walden University

May 2018

## Abstract

The fast food industry is experiencing issues related to employee engagement and retention. Researchers have shown that managers' transformational leadership behaviors impact employee engagement and turnover intent in various work environments; however, no research to date has evaluated its influence on the fast food industry's hourly-wage, nonmanagement workforce. Building on the theoretical research of Burns and Bass, this study was conducted to examine the relationships among managers' 5 transformational leadership behaviors of idealized influence attributes, idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration and employee engagement and turnover intent. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and Turnover Intention Measure were used to assess ( $N = 116$ ) hourly-waged, nonmanagement fast food employees' engagement and turnover intent. Stepwise regression analyses were used to determine whether managers' transformational leadership behaviors predicted employee engagement and turnover intent. Results indicated that Intellectual Stimulation was a statistically significant predictor of employee engagement and turnover intention at the .05 alpha level. These findings supported the transformational leadership model in a different work environment, potentially increasing its generalizability. Additionally, findings suggest transformational leadership that encompasses facets of intellectual stimulation would be a better fit for the fast food industry. The study findings might promote positive social change by encouraging the fast food industry to train leaders in behaviors that can result in greater employee engagement and lower turnover intent.

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures .....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study .....	3
Transformational Leadership .....	3
Employee Engagement .....	4
Turnover Intent .....	5
Problem Statement .....	6
Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent .....	8
Leadership Effectiveness and Employee Engagement .....	9
Purpose of the Study .....	11
Nature of the Study .....	12
Research Questions and Hypotheses .....	14
Theoretical Base.....	15
Transformational Leadership Theory .....	15
Employee Engagement .....	17
Turnover Intention .....	17
Definitions of Terms .....	18
Assumptions.....	21
Limitations .....	21
Delimitations.....	22

Significance of the Study .....	22
Summary and Transition.....	25
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	27
Literature Search Strategy.....	28
Organization of the Chapter .....	29
Theoretical Foundation: Leadership Styles and Behaviors .....	29
Transformational Leadership .....	31
Idealized Influence Attributes and Behaviors.....	32
Inspirational Motivation.....	33
Intellectual Stimulation.....	33
Individualized Consideration .....	34
Transactional Leadership .....	34
Contingent Reward .....	35
Active Management by Exception.....	35
Passive Management by Exception .....	36
Laissez-Faire Leadership .....	36
Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, and Turnover Intent.....	37
Employee Engagement .....	38
Work Engagement .....	39
Transformational Leaders and Employee Engagement .....	40
Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent .....	44
Fast Food Employees and Other Hourly Workers .....	46

Summary and Transition.....	48
Chapter 3: Research Methodology .....	51
Research Design and Approach .....	51
Setting and Sample .....	52
Data Collection .....	54
Measures .....	58
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire .....	58
Utrecht Work Engagement Scale.....	59
Turnover Intentions Measure .....	61
Data Analysis .....	62
Statistical Analysis.....	64
Informed Consent and Protection of Human Participants .....	66
Summary and Transition.....	67
Chapter 4: Results.....	68
Data Collection .....	68
Response Rate.....	69
Sample Demographics .....	70
Descriptive Statistics.....	70
Correlation Analysis .....	71
Test of Assumptions .....	72
Independence of Errors .....	73
Linear Relationship.....	73



Homoscedasticity of Residuals .....	75
Multicollinearity .....	76
Normally Distributed Errors .....	77
Regression Analysis.....	79
Research Question 1 .....	80
Research Question 2 .....	82
Summary and Transition.....	84
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	86
Interpretation of Findings .....	87
Theoretical Implications .....	89
Transformational Leadership Theory .....	89
Transformational Leadership Related to Employee Engagement and Turnover	
Intention .....	94
Practical Implications.....	98
Limitations of the Study.....	100
Recommendations.....	101
Implications for Social Change.....	102
Conclusion .....	104
References.....	105
Appendix A: Demographic Information.....	116
Appendix B: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire .....	117
Appendix C: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale .....	118

Appendix D: Turnover Intentions Measure ..... 119

## List of Tables

Table 1. Summary of Work and Well-Being Survey Response Rate .....	69
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics .....	70
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Transformational Leadership .....	71
Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention.....	71
Table 5. Assumptions: Independence of Errors .....	73
Table 6. Collinearity and Tolerance.....	77
Table 7. Normal Distribution (Outliers) for Employee Engagement Regression Model .....	78
Table 8. Normal Distribution (Outliers) for Turnover Intention Regression Model .....	78
Table 9. Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression: Criterion Variable Employee Engagement.....	81
Table 10. Regression Coefficients: Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement.....	82
Table 11. Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression: Criterion Variable Turnover Intention .....	83
Table 12. Regression Coefficients: Transformational Leadership and Turnover Intention .....	84

## List of Figures

Figure 1. G*Power sample size analysis results. ....	53
Figure 2. Organizational structure of the fast food company. ....	56
Figure 3. Scatterplot: Transformational leadership and employee engagement. ....	74
Figure 4. Scatterplot: Transformational leadership and turnover intention. ....	75
Figure 5. Assumptions: Homoscedasticity of residuals of employee engagement. ....	76
Figure 6. Assumptions: Homoscedasticity of residuals of turnover intention. ....	76
Figure 7. Normal distribution for employee engagement. ....	79
Figure 8. Normal distribution for turnover intention. ....	79

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The fast food industry is a highly lucrative and constantly evolving unit of the business sector that requires leaders and their employees to adapt to change quickly and with precision (Ng & Kelloff, 2013; Williams-Lee, 2008). Historically, leaders in this industry have operated from a leadership model that seeks to resolve immediate problems quickly (Ng & Kelloff, 2013; Williams-Lee, 2008). From this leadership framework, leaders fail to reflect upon and identify underlying issues that contribute to these reoccurring performance problems, and this failure contributes to a weakened infrastructure for the overall organization (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Although this business framework is an arguably profitable one, it requires continual oversight and mediation, and it ultimately impacts the integrity of the organization (Ryan, Ghazali, & Mohsin, 2011). Leaders who are put into these situations tend to become “know-it-alls”; do not listen; and are required to go from problem to problem, acting more like firefighters putting out fires than leaders who are developing future leaders (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

In the context of the fast food operation, leaders are more likely to have a less engaged workforce and higher rates of turnover because of poor management practices that fail to provide employees with support to boost morale and self-confidence (Bass & Bass, 2008; Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Less engaged employees are less motivated and more likely to seek alternative options when dissatisfied (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014). From an organizational standpoint, this situation is particularly problematic because it increases operational expenses in the form of direct and indirect costs, and significantly impacts overall profitability (Long, Thean, Ismail, & Jusoh, 2012).

The role of transformational leadership as a successful approach to leading individuals and teams in a variety of work environments has been well established in the research literature (Schaubroeck, Cha, & Lam, 2007; Song, Kolb, Lee, & Kim, 2012). Although a variety of leadership approaches exist (e.g., transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles), transformational leadership supersedes alternative approaches by using support, encouragement, and employee growth to enhance the work experience for employees (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996; Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jonas, 2013). Transformational leadership is associated with a more engaged workforce; better organizational outcomes, particularly in a competitive marketplace; and greater psychological well-being among employees and managers (Song et al., 2012). To address this fundamental problem, a tailored model of leadership is needed that fosters employee growth, engagement, and motivation in the fast food industry (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

This investigation sought to address a significant gap in research pertaining to transformational leadership. Muckey (2012) suggested that further research be conducted regarding transformational leadership, hourly workers, and engagement. Specifically, the aim of this study was to determine the extent that fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behaviors on five dimensions was associated with higher employee engagement and lower turnover intent. I also wanted to determine which of the five transformational leadership behaviors had the strongest relationship to employee engagement and turnover intent.

## **Background of the Study**

Leadership is a vital component in an organization, and it often has been cited as the primary factor determining whether a firm succeeds or fails (Bass & Bass, 2008). Organizations with effective leadership have greater sustainability over time, enjoy more profitability, and can compete more successfully and effectively in a volatile marketplace (Bass & Bass, 2008; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Employee engagement is key to organizational success because it relates to overall productivity and because leaders function as key influencers of employees' experiences within their job roles and the organization (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Leadership approaches offer various behavioral models that leaders might consider using to guide or advise followers in ways that might reduce turnover intent (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

### **Transformational Leadership**

One style that might be successful in combating the short-range, shallow-thinking, and unrealistic fast food leadership mentality is transformational leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008). This style of leadership focuses on an evolving relationship between leaders and followers through active encouragement, behavioral modeling by leaders, and mentorship or guidance through a skill set focused on the improvement of individual employees to the benefit of teams and/or organizations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership comprises five specific behaviors that can foster employee growth and development (Bass & Bass, 2008; Burns, 1978). The five behaviors are idealized influence attributes (IA), idealized influence behavior (IB), inspirational motivation (IM), intellectual stimulation (IS), and individualized consideration (IC;

Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transformational leaders use these five behaviors to motivate and inspire employees to achieve higher levels of success and become moral agents for themselves and the organizations (Bass, 1985). In this manner, leaders gain power by meeting the higher order needs of followers, such as striving for self-actualization and individual growth (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Maslow, 1943).

Transformational leaders surpass the skill set of alternative leadership styles by using the five behaviors to enhance the meaning that employees derive from their work (Bass & Bass, 2008). Leaders who operate from this specific orientation are able to build more committed and engaged employees by addressing higher order purpose, identifying their needs, and facilitating their growth potential (Bass & Bass, 2008; Burns, 1978). Followers generally characterize these leaders as role models and mentors who show concern for the employees through the provision of support, growth, and encouragement (Schaubroeck et al., 2007).

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is a psychological state that contributes to higher work performance levels through behavioral changes (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Engaged employees have emotional connections to their organizations and the organizational goals that make them more willing to demonstrate enhanced levels of involvement and commitment to the overarching goals of the organizations. Employee engagement is an essential component of organizations that allows them to remain successful over the long term and be competitive in the marketplace (Long et al., 2012).



Poor management practices might create a less engaged workforce if employees lack clear boundaries and expectations within their job roles and functions (Bass & Bass, 2008). The lack of employee engagement can have a negative effect on organizations via a reduction in productivity and motivation that might cause other employees to adopt such work practices. Leaders who place employees where they can learn, be successful, and grow personally and professionally set the framework for fostering engagement in employees (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

### **Turnover Intent**

Turnover has long been a stressor for employers and employees in the fast food industry (Ng & Kelloff, 2013; Williams-Lee, 2008). Employees have cited low wages, upward mobility challenges, poor working conditions, and deficient managers as factors that cause them to leave. When organizations experience high turnover rates, they suffer lower morale, have less experienced teams, and require more time to train replacement employees, all of which can reduce organizations' overall performance. Turnover also significantly impacts the financial outcomes of organizations and impairs their ability to keep up with competitors in the marketplace (Kwon, 2014).

Although there has been a considerable amount of research on the use of transformational leadership in the organizational sector, few researchers have addressed the ways in which a transformational behavioral skill set could modify the way that the fast food industry operates (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). In particular, transformational leadership has been a less explored approach to management within this industry, which has failed to address the underlying and well-established patterns related to the long-term

retention of employees. A transformational leadership approach could be a potential solution to the issues of poor engagement and high employee turnover in the fast food industry.

### **Problem Statement**

It is not known how to address the lack of employee engagement and the high rates of turnover in the fast food industry (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The engagement and turnover of employees are significant problems in the fast food industry, which has seen a dramatic drop in stock market value in recent years (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The mean hourly wage for the 3.7 million fast food workers in the United States is \$9.89, and the mean annual income for fast food workers is \$20,580 (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016). Low working wages continue to make it difficult for companies to maintain a reliable workforce over a long period of time (Kwon, 2014). These issues (i.e., lack of engagement and high turnover intent) result in significant financial losses for organizations because employees are less productive, less engaged with the organizations, and more dissatisfied in their jobs (Battistelli, Galletta, Portoghese, & Vandenberghe, 2013; Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

Employees also experience great disruption in their personal and professional lives when turnover occurs, and a history of turnover by employees is associated with less future engagement. Although transformational leadership might help to solve these problems, no previous research on use of a transformational leadership model of behavioral change in the fast food industry was found. The fast food sector has not been a well-researched field in the transformational leadership organizational literature. The fast

food sector has the potential to benefit from a different leadership approach, and the basis of this study was to identify whether transformational leadership behaviors might improve outcomes for employees and organizations.

Hiring and retaining hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees in the fast food industry is becoming much more difficult (Dubina, 2015). The fast food environment is a fast-paced, high-intensity environment, and situations occur that require managers to make quick decisions (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Transformational leaders have an impact on followers by increasing their motivation to strive for higher individual and organizational results.

When comparing fast food leaders to senior executive leaders, political leaders, or military leaders, the styles of communication, leadership environment, education, and company investment might be substantially different. However, there is a reason to believe that applying transformational leaders' behaviors to hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry could have positive results. A transformational approach to leadership provides leaders with enhanced communication skills and adaptive measures that enable them to use crises as a learning tool for followers (Bass & Bass, 2008). I believe that transformational leadership is critical in the fast-paced fast food industry.

Likewise, transformational leaders can reframe crises into developmental challenges to enhance their learning potential and demonstrate how to maintain high-quality work performance under stressful conditions (Pines, 1980). The transformational leadership process fosters self-confidence in followers and helps them to learn to face

uncertain and ambiguous circumstances more effectively (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Furthermore, transformational leaders demonstrate consistent and appropriate behavior across various situational circumstances, thus increasing the likelihood that employees or followers will understand organizational procedures, practices, and policies (Lee, Almanza, Jang, Nelson, & Ghiselli, 2013). For these reasons, it might be beneficial for fast food organizations wishing to increase employee engagement and reduce staff turnover to implement training programs that teach the transformational style of leadership to their leaders. I examined the relationship between managers' transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC and the ways that they individually and collectively are related to the employee engagement and turnover intent of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry.

### **Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent**

Much like leadership, employee engagement is a core component of organizational success, sustainability in a competing marketplace, and overall profitability (Saks & Gruman, 2014; Serrano & Reichard, 2011). Failed employee engagement not only reduces profitability through impairments in workflow and motivation but also increases the likelihood that current employees will leave the organizations in the future. The primary factor contributing to employee disengagement and dissatisfaction in organizations relates to poor leadership practices (Bass & Bass, 2008; Gopal, 2003). When organizational leaders fail, core structural frameworks are compromised, resulting in slowed profitability and growth, greater employee

dissatisfaction, and other adverse business outcomes (Leary et al., 2013; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saba, 2013).

Employee turnover affects profitability, regardless of industry or sector (Long et al., 2012). The fast food industry has the highest rate of turnover for any industry in the organizational sector, with companies such as McDonald's and Arby's operating at estimates as high as 200% (Thompson, 2012). Turnover has been attributed to the lack of engagement of employees and the lack of investment by organizations, both of which have led employees to seek other employment options (Battistelli et al., 2013; Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014). In the fast food industry, the presence of alternatives is particularly salient because employees tend to work in nonsalaried and sometimes temporary positions (Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiya, 1985). Issues related to the lack of stability and consistency, which often are active problems in a fast food context, also increase the likelihood that dissatisfied employees express turnover intent (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

### **Leadership Effectiveness and Employee Engagement**

Leadership is a necessary component of the change process for organizations when they must adapt to environmental, technological, or other changes necessitated by the marketplace and competing forces (Bass & Bass, 2008). According to some researchers, the primary factor contributing to engagement issues and high turnover rates in the fast food industry is an outdated model of leadership (Lee et al., 2013; Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Within the context of this outdated yet well-established and practiced fast food leadership framework, best described as a combination of transactional and laissez-

laissez-faire styles, many issues exist with problem identification, management, and solution generation. The current transactional/laissez-faire fast food leadership model allows leaders to resolve problems quickly in reactionary ways that reduce the likelihood that leader growth can occur and discourages active reflection on core factors associated with problem reoccurrence. Moreover, rapid decision making, when not well thought out and planned, leads to ineffective solutions that are more likely to hinder the growth potential of followers (Bass & Bass, 2008). Employees who feel that their organizations do not support their growth potential tend to be less committed to the organizations and their roles in them (Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, & Ahlburg, 2005).

Businesses that use a transactional style of leadership experience the same issues over time because they fail to address the root causes of the problems. Transformational leaders address not only the core issues but also the leaders causing the issues, thus facilitating correction of the underlying reasons for the issues. Once transformational leaders address the fundamental reasons for organizational problems, it is rare for the same issues to reoccur.

The fast-paced and quickly changing fast food industry environment demands that leaders adopt new knowledge and behaviors (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Creating new leaders who possess the necessary proficiency to deal with the variety of circumstances found in the fast food workplace is difficult. Increasing the difficulty of this challenging task includes fighting the competition for talent, adhering to government regulations, and struggling with an unstable global economy. Strong leaders, those demonstrating that they can produce positive results, must possess the correct skills required to overcome

these and other obstacles. The fast food industry is expected to provide quick meals that satisfy customers and bring owners a profit. Understanding how to select, train, and maintain successful leaders who could lead fast food restaurants requires more research.

To date, there has been sparse research on the topic of the leadership of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry. The fast food industry suffers from a high turnover rate that hinders performance significantly (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). This study partially filled the gap in the research literature that would enable fast food restaurants to stay in business and fast food workers to keep their jobs.

### **Purpose of the Study**

I conducted this study to determine whether transformational leadership predicts the engagement of fast food employees and the probability of turnover intent. I addressed the individual-level factors of employee engagement and turnover intent. I also determined which of the five behaviors related to transformational leadership predicted fast food employee engagement and turnover intent the most strongly. The goal of this study was to help researchers and employers to design training programs that teach fast food leaders how to lead in ways that increase employee engagement and decrease turnover intent. By using focused training that is based on the results of this study, the industry should find more employee engagement and less turnover intent, conditions that are more positive for employers and employees.

### **Nature of the Study**

I conducted this quantitative study using a stepwise multiple linear regression model to determine whether the five transformational leadership behaviors (i.e., IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC) are significant predictors of employee engagement and turnover intent, as recommended by Hofaidhllaoui and Chhinzer (2014). Participants were hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees working in various fast food restaurants throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida under the supervision of one manager per restaurant. At the time of the study, each restaurant had only one manager, and all employees of each restaurant worked only for that manager. Data were collected using a paper-based format. I distributed the survey package directly to employees during their shifts. Due to time constraints and the need to keep the restaurants operating during the data collection process, participants completed the survey package at different times during their shifts.

The restaurants included in this study were randomly selected. All hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the selected restaurants were eligible to participate in the study. I informed employees about and invited them to participate through a verbal offer that was read word for word from a document I provided. This same verbal offer was placed on a one-page flyer provided to each selected restaurant manager to be posted on the employee bulletin board. Employees were allowed to sit in the lobbies of their respective restaurants to complete the survey package. Where there were more quiet and private areas elsewhere in the restaurants, such as the restaurant manager's office, the employees were offered the option to complete the survey package there, instead. Each



employee received the survey package, a pen, and instructions. I instructed employees to focus on completing the survey and to not worry about work while doing so. Employees were given a minimum of 1 hour to complete the survey package; however, no employee took longer than 30 minutes to complete the survey package. The intent was to create an atmosphere where the employees did not feel pressured to complete the survey package quickly or to get back to work. All employees were on the clock while completing the survey package.

The survey package included an informed consent document, and based on the recommendation of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), implied consent was used. The potential participants were given an informed consent document that covered background information about the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of the study, the risks and benefits of being in the study, payment, privacy, contacts and questions, and sections that required their consent. Participants were offered a copy of the consent form to keep for their records if they desired. No names of employees were placed on any documents in the survey package, thus ensuring the confidential and anonymous nature of their participation. The survey package included questions asking about demographics (see Appendix A); and a combination of items gathered from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; see Appendix B; Avolio & Bass, 2004); the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; see Appendix C; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006); and the Turnover Intentions Measure (TIM; see Appendix D; Emberland & Rundmo, 2010).

On the days of data collection, the researcher verbally asked the participants to provide demographics information relevant to age, gender, length of time working under current manager, length of time working for current employer, and length of time working in the fast food industry. Participants completed the rater form of the MLQ to assess the managers' leadership behaviors, and the researcher used those data to determine the relative presence of transformational leadership behaviors manifested by managers and their impact on followers. Specifically, I conducted this study to determine which of the five transformational behaviors has the strongest relationship on employee engagement and turnover intent. Details about the nature of the study and the methodology are presented in Chapter 3.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The research questions (RQs) focused on understanding more about the nature of the relationship between the five transformational leadership behaviors (i.e., IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC) and employee engagement and turnover intent of the fast food industry's hourly-wage, nonmanagement workforce. Two RQs and their hypotheses guided the study:

RQ1. Do fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement, as assessed by the UWES?

*H*<sub>01</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels do not predict their hourly wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement.

*H*<sub>a1</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement.

RQ2. Do fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent?

*H*<sub>02</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, do not predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent, as assessed by the TIM.

*H*<sub>a2</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent, as assessed by the TIM.

Based on the hypotheses, I proposed that the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC would significantly affect the engagement and overall turnover intent of hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees working in the fast food industry. I identified which of the five transformational behaviors significantly predicted employee engagement and turnover intent. I theorized that significant differences would exist among the five transformational behaviors, and this study helped to determine which of the five transformational leadership behaviors were the most significantly related to employee engagement and turnover intention.

## **Theoretical Base**

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

The theoretical base for this study included the following key constructs: transformational leadership, employee engagement, and turnover intent. More

specifically, five transformational leadership behaviors (i.e., IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC) have been found to be critical components of effective leadership (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) researched the transformational leadership behaviors of political leaders, military leaders, and the academic community of his time. Bass (1985) subsequently applied these same behaviors to other white-collar senior leaders and reported similar findings. In general, Bass and Burns both asserted that when leaders model transformational leadership behaviors, followers adopt leadership behaviors that mirror those of the leaders. Transformational leaders achieve this goal by using one or more of the five transformational behaviors as situations in the workplace require (Bass, 1985).

The notion of creating a workplace environment where the good of the whole workforce is more important than the good of any one individual defines the actions of transformational leaders. When transformational leaders lead in this manner, they create an atmosphere that allows followers to become leaders and helps them to perform at higher levels. In addition, transformational leadership theorists have posited that employees will grow, demonstrate greater independence, and experience more empowerment in their job roles as the result of this leadership platform (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003).

Transformational leaders can operate from individual-focused and group-focused goals of behavioral outcomes (Wang & Howell, 2010). Individual-focused goals aim to enhance the self-esteem of followers, improve their overall performance, and empower them by enabling them to reach their full potential as employees. Group-focused goals are directed toward values and beliefs shared by individuals and group members as a

whole to foster employee engagement. Both sets of goals lead to the enhancement of employee growth and development, which also can increase the likelihood of employee engagement. Engaged employees can enhance the overall outcomes of the groups and the respective organizations by motivating others through behavioral modeling.

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is of particular concern to organizations because they have invested significant resources in the orientation, training, and continued education of employees (Saboe, Taing, Way, & Johnson, 2015). Engaged employees are more motivated in the work environment, and they are more satisfied with their jobs, which leads to greater productivity; consequently, fiscal outcomes for organizations also are enhanced (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004). Engagement should be seen as a two-way process between employees and organizations (Jha & Kumar, 2016). By having an engaged workforce, organizations are more likely to have higher productivity, enhanced levels of performance across the employee base, and employees who consider themselves more well overall. Engagement also is a way to increase the commitment levels of employees and strengthen employees' resolve to accomplish organizational goals. In addition, by promoting engagement, employees might feel more personally responsible for building and supporting camaraderie, teamwork, and cultural democracy in the workplace (Jha & Kumar, 2016).

### **Turnover Intention**

Turnover intention refers to the cognitive and behavioral manifestation of employees' commitment to their organizations (Saboe et al., 2015). Employees who

possess greater likelihood of turnover intention tend to be less committed to their organizations, less engaged in their work role(s), and less motivated to go above and beyond their normal duties and responsibilities to meet organizational expectations and/or goals (Steers & Mowday, 1981). Employees who support greater organizational commitment have lower turnover intentions, and those who can identify with and trust their leaders demonstrate greater employee engagement and organizational commitment (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014). Therefore, leaders have the power and ability to change the attitudes of followers in the workplace.

When employees leave organizations, they create gaps in the workforce, leave machines idle, and increase organizations' operating costs. Turnover decreases the talent on teams and means an increased workload for managers, who must continue to lead their teams while finding and hiring new talent. In addition, once new employees are hired, development and training objectives must be met before the employees can become productive.

### **Definitions of Terms**

*Employee engagement:* Engaged employees work with a passion and feel a profound connection with their organizations. They drive innovation and move their companies forward (Crabtree, 2013).

*Idealized attributes (IA):* Idealized attributes instill pride in followers, act in a way that creates respect, help others to look beyond their own needs to address the needs of the group, and display confidence and power in their daily activities (Bass, 1985).

*Idealized behaviors (IB):* Idealized behaviors include talking about important values and beliefs, encouraging followers to demonstrate a strong sense of purpose, setting the environment up so that followers consider the ethical consequences of their decisions, and lead followers to have a collective sense of mission (Bass, 1985).

*Individual consideration (IC):* Individual consideration occurs when one attempts to pay attention to the individuals' need for achievement by acting as mentor, teacher, or coach. In this behavior of transformational leadership, followers are treated as individuals instead of members as a group. Time is spent with individual followers to help them to develop personal strengths and achieve aspirations (Bass, 1985).

*Inspirational motivation (IM):* Inspirational motivation includes behaving in ways that motivate followers by creating meaningful and challenging work. These behaviors include describing an optimistic future, enthusiastically talking about what the group members need to accomplish, verbally painting a visual image of a future that compels followers to want to achieve the goal, and showing confidence that the goal will be achieved (Bass, 1985).

*Intellectual stimulation (IS):* Intellectual stimulation challenges the followers to be innovative and creative in their problem solving; is also accomplished by getting the followers to look at issues from many different vantage points (Bass, 1985).

*Job satisfaction:* Job satisfaction is the degree of pleasure and achievement experienced in the job when employees know that the work is worth doing (Saari & Judge, 2004).

*Laissez-faire leader:* A laissez-faire leader avoids being part of the decision-making process and abdicates leadership responsibilities (Bass, 1990).

*Transactional leader:* A transactional leader is defined by three behaviors:

(a) Contingent rewarding is the process of offering rewards for the good performance of subordinates and recognizing accomplishments (Bass, 1990); (b) active management by exception occurs when managers look for areas where subordinates are not following procedures and respond with corrective action; and (c) passive management by exception involves managers stepping in to make corrections when employees fail to meet standards.

*Transformational leader:* A model of integrity and fairness, a transformational leader sets clear goals, has high expectations, encourages others, provides support and recognition, stirs the emotions of people, gets people to look beyond their self-interests, and inspires people to reach for the improbable (Bass, 1985).

*Transformational leadership:* Transformational leadership is a process where “leaders and their followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1978, p. 20).

*Turnover intent:* Turnover intent is the personal estimated probability of employees that they have a deliberate intent to leave their organizations permanently in the near future (Long et al., 2012).



### **Assumptions**

When conducting this study, I made several assumptions:

- All participants would answer the survey package questions truthfully and in a timely fashion.
- The franchise owned by a single private owner and acting CEO of the organization would provide a sufficient number of employees to participate in the study.
- Free and unbiased access to the participants from the large multinational fast food franchise would be provided.
- The researcher ensured that all participants had enough time during their work schedules to complete the survey package by being present during the data collection.
- The franchise owner and leaders in the corporation would support the data collection process.

### **Limitations**

Data collected from the MLQ were based on a single point in time rather than an extended period. The instruments have not been used previously to study hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry. I collected demographic information about the participants (i.e., age, gender, time in the organization, time in the fast food industry, and time under their current managers) and used a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis to determine whether they significantly impacted variability in the dependent variables (DVs) of employee engagement and turnover intent. I also

considered and controlled for differences by entering the data in a stepwise fashion in geographic location, either supervised by the director of east operations or the director of west operations, in the empirical analysis to rule out the possibility that the restaurant locations would bias the findings.

The participants self-reported their responses to the survey package items, a protocol that might have introduced the Hawthorne effect, that is, the possibility of responding according to what they believed the researcher wanted them to say. I attempted to avoid having this effect by controlling and standardizing the instructions to the participants. On the 5 days of data collection, I was on site at each restaurant to administer all instructions in person using a guide to ensure standardization.

### **Delimitations**

I used the following constraint measures at the time of the study to reduce or eliminate bias:

- The employees were operating in roles that had similar goals, objectives, and expectations.
- The different geographical locations of the restaurants were controlled for in the regression analysis.

### **Significance of the Study**

The fast food industry in the United States employs approximately 3.7 million individuals (BLS, 2012). However, one significant problem in this industry involves the types and natures of the jobs, which tend to be part-time positions, relatively immobile in terms of job advancement, and poorly managed from an on-site context (Schlosser,

2000). These factors, individually and in combination, have continued to contribute to higher rates of turnover and lack of engagement among hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry (Schlosser, 2000; Schmeltzer, 2007). Lack of stability and consistency in the workforce is problematic from the individual perspective, that is, for employees who lose or change positions frequently, as well as from an organizational or a business-oriented perspective focused on financial outcomes and issues related to reductions in profits.

The current leadership model in which this industry operates, best described as a combination of transactional and laissez-faire styles, is inefficient, leads to greater financial loss for organizations, and results in higher employee turnover, all of which are detrimental to the individuals who work in the fast food industry in terms of stability and security of employment (Schmeltzer, 2007). Management lack insight, consistently failing to address problems through the use of solution generation and reflection by operating in a reactionary style to issues rather than take a planned approach (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). A transformational approach to leadership offers organizations and employees a new, more efficient, and motivating framework in which to operate. Researchers have investigated this approach in contexts involving political leaders, military leaders, the academic community, and hospital/patient care settings, and they have found and identified improvements in team cohesion, team efficiency, and leader-rated effectiveness (Bass & Bass, 2008; Hargis, Watt, & Piotrowski, 2011; Stadelmann, 2010).

Research has focused on transformational leaders and their impact on followers in various environmental contexts, but this study was the first to investigate whether a transformational approach to leadership is both possible and effective within the context of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Obvious benefits exist for the application of transformational leadership in the restaurant and/or fast food industry in regard to individual and organizational change. Transformational leaders could potentially modify the dynamics in the work environment by changing the perspectives of employees or followers through the provision of the five behaviors that constitute transformational leadership. This leadership model has been successful in increasing employee engagement and decreasing turnover intent, with the results being beneficial to individuals and organizations alike.

Results of this study identified the relationship between the five transformational leadership behaviors and employee engagement and turnover intent, which has been a less explored context of the organizational literature. This research extends theoretical knowledge by applying the principles of transformational leadership in an hourly-wage, nonmanagement work environment. Based on the extensive literature review conducted for this study, it became clear that few researchers have evaluated how these five transformational behaviors might function in an hourly-wage, nonmanagement context such as the fast food industry because of the training costs and time associated with this leadership approach.

To my knowledge, this study was one of the first to expand on the model of transformational leadership by examining it in a previously unexplored business context.

The results might facilitate implementation of a new model of leadership in the fast food industry with hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers. This research broadens the current understanding regarding which of the five behaviors of transformational leadership have the strongest relationship to the employee engagement and turnover intent of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry. The results might have an impact on social change as more organizations begin to use this knowledge to lead employees and/or followers in more productive and effective ways.

### **Summary and Transition**

In this chapter, I introduced the study and presented the problem. I also discussed the importance of discovering which of the five transformational leadership behaviors of IM, IS, IA, IB, and IC might have the strongest relationship to employee engagement and turnover intent. Considering the excessively high rate of turnover in the fast food industry and its impact on business outcomes, potential identified approaches that might resolve or lower issues in relation to these outcomes are greatly warranted within the industry. The chapter also included information about the background of the problem; the purpose, significance, and nature of the study; core definitions related to the study; and assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Chapter 2 includes a more in-depth review of the literature on transformational leadership, employee engagement and turnover intent, and current problems adversely affecting the fast food industry and associated outcomes. Chapter 3 explains the research design, methodology, research model, and methods for testing the hypotheses. Also included are the setting and sample procedures, data collection process, measures, and the

data analysis plan. Chapter 4 includes a short review of the study's purpose and the results of the data collection and data analysis processes. Chapter 5 presents the researcher's interpretation of findings, a discussion of the results, and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Leadership is an important component of organizations because it results in more profitability and more success in the marketplace, and it allows companies to remain competitive for longer periods in highly results-driven industries. For example, the fast food industry operates within a marketing framework that must adapt to changing customer demands and meet new and evolving consumer nutrition needs and/or expectations while continuing to remain competitive, maintain an engaged workforce, and comply with globally diverse laws and regulations (Ng & Kelloff, 2013; Williams-Lee, 2008). Furthermore, many fast food giants, such as McDonald's, are facing rapid expansion domestically and globally, a challenge that is placing more pressure on leaders within the industry (Williams-Lee, 2008). While expanding the brand globally, McDonalds also is experiencing significant image problems related to changing customers' desires regarding the dining-out experience (Tuttle, 2015). The primary focus for fast food industry leaders is to identify individuals capable of fulfilling such demanding roles.

Leaders in the fast food industry have leadership characteristics consistent with their restaurant model, which seeks immediate gratification, lacks adequate vision, and sets and upholds unrealistic expectations (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). This model of leadership is problematic because it tends to operate reactively, not proactively. The transformational approach to leadership provides a potential proactive mechanism to develop the organization and its culture internally rather than concentrate on surface reactionary issues moment to moment. Specifically, a transformational leadership style

seeks to develop and foster employee growth to enhance organizational outcomes by transforming employees into more effective workers and, ultimately, leaders capable of being their own change agents.

Transformational leaders go well beyond simply setting goals for and assigning tasks to followers. Transformational leaders address the followers' self-worth, enable them to do more than the followers ever thought possible, and help followers to look to higher purposes (Bass & Bass, 2008). This study expanded on previous research by determining specifically which of the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC relates the most strongly with followers.

Previous research, primarily conducted with politicians, military personnel, and educational leaders, has supported the notion that transformational leaders have a more positive effect on followers and obtain better workplace results. What researchers have not understood is how transformational leadership relates to fast food workers and other hourly-wage employees. Many organizations invest in training salaried employees, but they do not invest as much time or money in their hourly workforce (Burns, 1978). I hypothesized that use of a transformational leadership model in the context of the fast food industry would lead to more employee engagement and less turnover intent.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The search of the literature involved using electronic databases that included ProQuest and EBSCO. The search included books, websites, and peer-reviewed articles. Using a Boolean search of terms such as *transformational leadership*, *fast food*, *turnover intent*, *employee engagement*, and *hourly workers* resulted in 10,000 references. Many



references were not considered relevant to this study because a large number of them referred to either student populations or non-hourly-wage employees such as political and military leaders. Literature deemed pertinent to the study was included in the review.

### **Organization of the Chapter**

Literature related to the five transformational leadership behaviors of IM, IS, IA, IB, and IC; employee engagement, and turnover intent as they related to the RQs was reviewed. I developed the RQs to determine which of the five transformational leadership behaviors are the most effective in producing positive outcomes (i.e., more employee engagement and less turnover intent) among hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry. Reviewing the literature facilitated an examination of the ways in which this target population might be different from the professional population typically examined in leadership research (Burns, 1978).

The chapter begins with a discussion of transformational leadership, followed by explanations of transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. The final paragraphs include discussions of employee engagement and turnover intent. To understand the benefits and advantages of transformational leadership, it is important to weigh and consider other approaches and the ways in which they are similar and different in context. Transformational leadership is a more complex approach that requires more investment of time and attentiveness on the part of managers.

### **Theoretical Foundation: Leadership Styles and Behaviors**

Leadership models provide insight into different approaches to management based on the needs of organizations and their employees. Successful leaders can identify

the appropriate administrative behaviors needed in various workplace situations that facilitate the enhancement of employee performance (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership is oriented toward an exchange in the work environment that allows leaders and employees to gain tangible outcomes for completed work (Burns, 1978). This form of leadership is focused on the short term because it is easier to implement than transformational leadership and has immediate results. Transactional leaders are not trying to build common aims and goals for themselves and their followers; rather, they are trying to set up an exchange of sorts that will benefit the interests of individuals or groups without considering a team-oriented perspective. Modal values, or the values of means, are the principle monitors of transactional leadership. These modal values include “honesty, responsibility, fairness, and the honoring of commitments which without these, transactional leadership would not work” (Burns 1978, p. 426).

In contrast, “end-values such as liberty, justice, and equality are what the transformational leader is interested in” (Burns, 1978, p. 426). Transformational leadership is more potent and complex because it gives followers the opportunity to become (i.e., transform into) leaders and leaders into moral agents (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership requires managers to exhibit or model the ethical behaviors and values that they want employees to incorporate into the work environment, regardless of the manager’s presence or absence. In addition, transformational leaders attempt to raise the values and goals of followers by acting as mentors. They work with their followers to give these relationships a focus on a collective purpose. To build this common bond with followers, transformational leaders might change their approach to

some situations in order to honor the requests of followers. Although these actions might be difficult for observers to see, transformational leaders continuously attempt to harmonize the leader-follower relationship by enriching their common motives, values, and goals. Therefore, the idea of being moral agents is explained by transformational leaders as devoting their time and efforts to raising their followers up through levels of morality by their actions with concern for, and dedication to, the followers.

The discussion about leadership styles was extended in 1985 to include transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and behaviors (Bass, 1985). Leaders who direct team members in positive ways are more likely to achieve results that strengthen not only the team but also the individual followers. Furthermore, leaders working in a fast-paced environment, such as the fast food industry, with followers who might have an overly relaxed mentality about work will experience more success by focusing on slowing down and moving at a pace that might be a better way to achieve long-term goals. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of the five specific transformational leadership behaviors on hourly fast food workers' success, as measured by employee engagement and turnover intent.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leaders have been described as being able to inspire and motivate followers to look beyond their own self-interests and focus on accomplishing the collective goals of their respective organizations (Avolio, Sosik, Jung, & Berson, 2003). Transformational leadership can be broken down into five distinct behaviors, commonly referred to as the "5 Is" of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Transformational leaders not only encourage followers to meet their normal expectations but also convince their followers to strive for higher levels of potential as well as higher levels of moral and ethical standards (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

### **Idealized Influence Attributes and Behaviors**

Leaders who use idealized influence are well liked, admired, respected, and trusted (Fu, Tsui, Liu, & Li, 2010). When transformational leaders use individualized influence, followers want to emulate them. In addition, followers see that the leaders consider the followers' needs over their own needs and usually conduct themselves in ways that exemplify high principles, values, and ethics (Hargis et al., 2011). The need for idealization pushes the leader and followers to detach from a more self-centered approach to one of self-realization, which is viewed as a higher order leadership trait. This pursuit of idealization in leaders aids individuals in seeking causes more important than themselves. Idealized influence comprises IA and IB (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

**Idealized attributes.** IA include such actions as instilling pride in followers as the result of their association with the leaders (Weichun, Sosik, Riggio, & Baiyin, 2012). IA are directed at influencing the followers' perceptions of the leaders as powerful, confident, and capable of accomplishing the stated goals (Kirkbride, 2006). These leaders also are focused on goal attainment and the development of a sense of mission among followers. The key behaviors of IA leaders include demonstrating high levels of competence, using power effectively to enhance group performance, and building respect for the leaders (Bass & Riggio, 2013). The attributes of IA leaders make the followers proud to be associated with them (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

**Idealized behaviors.** IB are leaders' most important values and beliefs (Avolio & Bass, 2004). These behaviors reflect the leaders' strong sense of purpose and ability to lead teams toward a collective sense of mission. Leaders who exhibit IB are held in high esteem and are seen as people who always consider their actions and their effect on others (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Finally, IB leaders lead teams in ways that consider the moral and ethical consequences of their decisions.

### **Inspirational Motivation**

Optimistic leaders who display enthusiasm use IM to encourage followers (Hartog & Belschak, 2012). These leaders help followers to create future visions that are meaningful and challenging but within reach. IM leaders are careful not to set goals or visions that are not attainable and would demotivate followers (Jaskyte, 2004).

In addition to energizing followers to achieve future goals, IM leaders also create a unified sense for teams to work toward one purpose and mission (Hargis et al., 2011). IM leaders involve the followers in building the vision for the future that everyone on the teams want to achieve; the vision also comes with clearly communicated expectations (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

### **Intellectual Stimulation**

To encourage followers to question why they do things in certain ways by critically examining their beliefs, values, and assumptions is a behavior manifested by IS leaders (Avolio & Bass, 2004). When followers are intellectually stimulated, it is because the leaders want them to be more innovative and creative. These leaders involve followers in the problem-solving process so that they can find solutions together (Bass &

Steidlmeier, 1999). IS leaders have a goal of developing followers who are more capable of thinking through and solving situations for themselves. Finally, IS leaders want to look at issues from different angles, seek diverse perspectives to find solutions, and encourage others to approach old issues with new ideas (Johnson, 2007).

### **Individualized Consideration**

IC leaders concentrate on the needs and desires of individual followers (Avolio & Bass, 2004). IC leaders tend to enrich relationships using one-on-one conversations; for this reason, they might be seen as practicing “management by walking around” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7). This leadership behavior provides encouragement to followers separately so that they can work toward achieving their full potential (Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & Spangler, 2004). This behavior also is seen as supporting a coaching or mentoring relationship. Once IC leaders understand the needs of followers, they will attempt to create learning opportunities that will help the followers to develop to their next higher level of potential (Humphrey, 2012).

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leaders use constructive and corrective transactions to ensure that followers accomplish the tasks that they, the leaders, desire (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transactional leaders are not looking to build relationships with followers; rather, they want to exchange something for work (Harms & Crede, 2010). A key characteristic of this leadership style is that leaders create this exchange relationship with followers to satisfy the leaders’ own self-interests (Bass & Bass, 2008). The constructive style of behavior is known as contingent reward (CR); the corrective style is known as

management by exception (MBE; Avolio & Bass, 2004). MBE is further divided into two subgroups, namely, active (MBEA) and passive (MBEP).

### **Contingent Reward**

CR is a method whereby leaders are very specific and clear in their requests of followers. Rewards for accomplishing the requested tasks are explained to and understood by followers in advance, and when the tasks have been completed, the followers are rewarded (Avolio & Bass, 2004). This behavior, although labeled transactional, has been considered more transformational than MBE (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Rewards to followers might come by way of psychological or material means. Psychological rewards, such as praise, might be seen as more transformational than material rewards such as bonuses, which would be seen as more transactional (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders who do not have the resources to offer rewards might have a difficult time gaining favor with followers who are expecting the exchange of rewards for their accomplishments (Bass, 1997).

### **Active Management by Exception**

MBEA is a behavior that sees leaders closely monitoring followers for mistakes or noncompliance with required standards (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Leaders use this thorough and close monitoring of followers so that they can take quick and sometimes harsh corrective actions when they observe deviations or errors (Riaz & Haider, 2010). This type of transactional leadership behavior might be effective in situations where safety of the operations is important (Bass & Riggio, 2006). MBEA leaders focus their full attention on the negative contributions, such as mistakes, failures, and complaints, of

the followers. MBEA leaders track mistakes as a way to demand higher standards of performance (Pieterse, Kipperberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010).

### **Passive Management by Exception**

MBEP leaders are reactive to situations or issues that arise in the workplace (Avolio & Bass, 2004). They will not take action on problems until after the problems have been brought to their attention. MBEP is sometimes seen in leaders who manage large numbers of employees and have the time to be more active. This type of leadership behavior includes not being specific with followers about expectations and agreements. In addition, goals and standards that the leaders express are not clarified or discussed with followers. The passive behavior of this type of leader has negative effects on the workforce and is seen as being closer than MBEA to the laissez-faire leadership style (Bass & Bass, 2008).

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership**

The absence of any interactions between leaders and followers characterizes this nonleadership style (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Although described as one of the leadership factors in the multifactor leadership theory, it entails a lack of all leadership behaviors (Bass, 1998). These nonleaders avoid such important leadership functions as making decisions, getting involved when needed to help followers, and responding to requests for help (Sosik & Cameron, 2010).

Laissez-faire nonleaders are absent from their place of duty and do not take an interest in or responsibility for their organizations (Barling et al., 1996). They avoid their responsibilities as leaders, they delay or ignore needed actions, and they are seen as the



most ineffective types of leaders. Other leadership approaches, such as that adopted by transformational leaders, provide greater potential for motivating workers to succeed in ways that are beneficial to the leaders, working peers, and whole organizations.

### **Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, and Turnover Intent**

To understand the range of benefits of transformational leadership to followers, it is important to consider other approaches to leadership. Based on Bass and Avolio's (1991) full range of leadership model, leaders fall on a continuum that ranges from passive to active and ineffective to effective. According to the model, transformational leadership is the most effective and active approach to optimize follower performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Each transformational behavior (i.e., IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC) provides a unique outcome that promotes follower success.

In the search of the literature, I found that information on the five transformational components and their separate relative contributions has been scant. The researcher theorized that evaluating the behaviors individually had the potential to reveal more valuable information about the mechanisms in which the individual behaviors have the most effect on fast food workers and the underlying means in which it is likely to manifest. Therefore, I evaluated and considered each behavior independently to understand the unique variance explained by the differentiated factors as they relate to employee engagement and turnover intention within the fast food industry.

Engaging fast food workers is fundamental to decreasing turnover intent and enhancing the quality of service (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Employee turnover is so high in the fast food industry that it directly affects profitability by discouraging fast food

restaurant chains from investing in short-term employees. This scenario creates a double-edged sword: Restaurants will not invest in hourly workers because they leave the company before the return on the investment can be realized, and employees will not stay at one restaurant for long because they are not being led in a way that encourages them to stay. Based on the notion that transformational leadership will have a positive effect and with a focus on the most prominent issues within the fast food industry, I chose engagement and turnover as outcomes of this research.

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is considered a fundamental component for success in the organizational sector (Song et al., 2012). The organizational and management literature has credited employee engagement with greater profitability and competitiveness for organizations in the marketplace (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Employee engagement is evidenced through higher productivity, less turnover and turnover intent, higher levels of organizational commitment in employees, and increased customer satisfaction (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks & Gruman, 2014). However, the literature has been unclear in the provision of a concise definition of the construct of employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Song et al., 2012).

Kahn (1992) introduced the concept of engagement and characterized it as “the harnessing of an organization members’ selves to their work roles” (p. 694). This definition dictated that engaged employees would bring all aspects of themselves, including cognitive, emotional, and physical skills, to their work performance. When employees are fully psychologically engaged in their work roles and the surrounding

environment, they have been described as attentive, focused, and connected (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Kahn theorized that when individuals are fully engaged in their work roles, they are less likely to experience disengagement or burnout, and they place more importance and commitment on their role performance and evaluation. Based on this premise, Kahn developed three core features or characteristics of employee engagement.

Kahn (1992) contended that when employees' higher level needs are met, they will be more engaged in the workplace. To be specific, psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability are considered precursors to employee engagement, according to Kahn's model. Psychological meaningfulness is derived from the feelings that employees experience after exerting themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally at work (Kahn, 1992; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Zhu, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2009). Psychological safety stems from the degree of trust that employees have in their workplace peers and leaders, and psychological availability is related to individual beliefs about the presence of the basic physical, cognitive, and emotional resources needed to be engaged employees in the work environment.

### **Work Engagement**

Another influential definition related to engagement defines work engagement within the context of burnout, first introduced in the research literature on employee burnout (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Work engagement is viewed on a continuum, with engagement at one end and burnout at the other end. Therefore, work engagement has been characterized by the absence of burnout. Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined work engagement from a motivational perspective that required a

positive affective and cognitive state while engaged in the work environment. They posited that motivated employees are less likely to experience burnout and are more likely to stay fully engaged within their relative roles at work.

According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), actively engaged workers are energetic, can communicate effectively, and feel confident in their ability to perform their job roles. A positive, fulfilled psychological mind set is evidenced by behavioral indicators that demonstrate vigor, dedication, and cognitive absorption in work-related tasks and activities (Schaufeli et al., 2006). Vigor is characterized by employees' high energy levels and intellectual resilience, or the ability to deal adequately with stress and adversity in work-related situations. Dedication is distinguished by employees' high levels of involvement and concern with their role performance, and feelings of significance, eagerness, and challenge in their roles. Absorption is the state of being fully attentive to and immersed in the tasks at hand.

### **Transformational Leaders and Employee Engagement**

Leadership is an essential component of the engagement process for employees in any type of organization (Zhu et al., 2009). Transformational leadership practices have the potential to enhance employees' productivity through the guidance and modeling behaviors of effective leaders (Bono & Anderson, 2005). One goal of transformational leaders involves giving followers the opportunity to increase their potential while meeting their needs concurrently (Zhu et al., 2009). Employees who feel that their needs are being met are more likely to experience positive feelings about their respective

organizations and exhibit confidence, both of which result in more effective performance in the workplace.

Zhu et al. (2009) theorized that because transformational leaders place an emphasis on increasing individual employees' responsibilities, which includes allowing them to take on challenges in the workplace environment, the results will be positive outcomes for engagement. Research has shown that transformational leadership behaviors share a positive relationship with Kahn's (1992) higher psychological needs of meaningfulness, safety, and ability. For instance, mentoring followers toward increased responsibility is thought to result in heightened feelings of psychological meaningfulness from work (Zhu et al., 2009).

According to Avolio and Bass's (2004) model of leadership, transformational leaders can challenge followers to develop and adopt innovative and novel ways of dealing with work challenges through inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1997; Avolio, Jung, & Bass, 1999; Zhu et al., 2009). Challenging employees not only provides psychological meaningfulness but also gives employees the opportunity to experience the psychological need for ability. As a result, the researcher expected to find that transformational leaders increase the likelihood that followers find value in their work because they feel that their work makes an important contribution to organizational success.

Zhu et al. (2009) suggested that positive organizational outcomes such as enhanced customer satisfaction, higher employee productivity, and increased profitability might influence worker engagement when transformational leadership practices are used.

Song et al. (2012) provided support for this position in their findings that followers' attitudes also impact the level of the leaders' influence on followers or employees. They reported that the specific level of engagement of each employee affected the organization's performance improvement outcomes for knowledge creation, which was directly related to how well a team, a group, a department, or the organization as a whole was able to communicate and collaborate in constructive and effective ways. However, because Song et al. conducted their study within a Korean cultural context, they suggested that the collectivistic organizational climate that encouraged interdependence among employees could not be generalized to other cultural contexts.

Leadership and management are roles that require the individuals in those positions to engage in different types of activities (Bass & Bass, 2008). Leaders tend to be transformational: They have a long-term perspective of change, endorse organizational visions and values, motivate their employees, and influence the larger system outside of their units. They also get employees to place the interests of the team over their own self-interests, and they create positive social and interpersonal work interactions. In contrast, managers are more transactional: They seek to solve immediate problems; adhere to rules, regulations, and procedures; and view their influence to be within the units that they manage. Leaders also operate differently from managers in terms of behaviors and thought processes.

According to Bass and Bass (2008), leaders develop, and managers maintain. Leaders ask what and why; managers ask how and when. Leaders originate; managers imitate. Leaders challenge the status quo; managers accept it. Leaders function in a

higher domain of cognitive analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; managers function in a lower cognitive domain of knowledge, comprehension, and application.

Researchers have estimated that managers spend 2% of their time reflecting, a finding that has been consistent with research pertaining to the “quick fix” mentality seen in the context of the fast food industry (Bass & Bass, 2008; Ng & Kelloff, 2013) and that leaders view reflection as a component of their personal growth and change, both of which can have a direct impact on their ability to strategize and plan for organizational success (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Managers in the fast food industry have failed workers and the organization in various ways (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Managers have lacked long-term views; instead, they have tended to react in immediate ways to situations and problems as they happen. The result has been a framework in which responsibility for mistakes has been placed upon individual workers and/or the organization rather than the managers, who arguably should have been in better positions to resolve problems. Trying to resolve issues quickly has meant that managers have focused less on how they can improve their practices to fix problems in the long-term and have failed to reflect on the nature and root source of problems.

Presently, fast food workers leave their positions at a rate higher than in any other industry (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). This turnover not only impacts individual restaurants negatively but also leads to greater financial losses for the organization. Ng and Kelloff posited that fast food employees are likely to leave their positions without much thought, and they theorized that the fundamental reason is related to poor leadership. Based on this

assumption, they postulated that the fast food industry needs leaders to develop strategic plans to deal with problems in order to enhance the experience of workers by creating challenges that foster their personal and professional growth while increasing their motivation.

### **Employee Engagement and Turnover Intent**

Jackofsky and Peters (1983) found desirability to be associated solely with job satisfaction and ease of movement to be related directly to the availability of job alternatives in the marketplace. The constructs of desirability and perceived ease of movement were the basis for a large portion of the literature on turnover intention. Several researchers have speculated on the various steps that lead up to the eventual turnover of employees, but debate continues as to whether a specific model can be applied generally to all populations (Mobley, 1977; Steers & Mowday, 1981).

Following this perspective, Hulin et al. (1985) proposed that the presence of job alternatives and job satisfaction can have different consequences for different populations of employees. In particular, the effect might differentiate marginal and temporary employees from permanent or full-time employees, and this effect might occur in the cognitive processes that lead to turnover. In other words, the factors that these two employee populations consider prior to turnover are likely to be markedly different based on contrasts between the relative stability and consistency of their positions. In the context of the fast food industry, where stability and consistency often are lacking, leaders face greater likelihood of frequent employee turnover, which significantly impacts the organization financially. Furthermore, individuals in a fast food environment



who find themselves unfulfilled in their jobs are less likely to hesitate to leave their positions, even if they describe feeling secure and/or comfortable in them (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

Contextual factors also play a critical role in behaviors related to turnover intention (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). Kammeyer et al. (2005) identified three pertinent contextual factors, namely, the presence of external alternatives, the presence of internal or transfer alternatives, and the cost of turnover. Alternatively, individuals' levels of embeddedness within the organization are one factor linked to turnover inhibition. Various factors such as social relationships and ongoing commitments to long-term projects also could be viewed as obstacles to turnover based on embeddedness.

Attitudinal factors relate to turnover intention based on individuals' levels of job satisfaction (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). Evidence has shown a link between turnover intention and low job satisfaction among employees across various organizations (Mobley, 1977; Steers & Mowday, 1981). Another attitudinal component is directly connected to the levels of satisfaction that employees feel in their current job roles or positions (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005). Organizational commitment, or the level of commitment to an organization's goals and mission, provides a compelling framework when predicting whether employees leave or stay.

The propensity or likelihood of employee turnover occurring involves various components, including antecedent factors, contextual factors, attitudinal factors, and job-related characteristics (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2005; Mobley, 1977; Steers & Mowday, 1981). Within the context of the fast food environment, employees are likely to

leave because of poor management, a fundamental lack of job role satisfaction, and the perception that other jobs are available. Fast food workers also might view their positions only as temporary jobs if the leaders do not support their personal and professional growth potential. In the absence of the aforementioned factors, employee commitment to the organization is likely to suffer.

### **Fast Food Employees and Other Hourly Workers**

Fast, convenient, and cheap are typical values that one might expect to receive as an employee or a consumer in a fast food environment (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

Historically, managers in the fast food industry have sought to resolve issues in immediate ways that have not considered core issues in the dissemination of work responsibility and the overall functioning of their restaurants. According to Ng and Kelloff (2013), fast food leaders tend to value the immediate gratification of resolving problems, and they also lack vision.

Because management in the fast food industry often fluctuates with higher-than-average turnover rates among employees in various roles, historically, management has tended to be more reactive in seeking immediate results (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). However, a reactive, fast-paced output orientation does not necessarily lead to better outcomes because it does not encourage managers to identify root problems. Consequently, the entire food service industry continues to rely on poorly considered, contextual, and immediate fixes while failing to investigate alternative solutions, and this reliance has produced an industry focused on organizational responsibility, not leader responsibility. A transformational leadership style transfers the responsibility and demands back to the

local restaurant leaders, who have more opportunity to remediate workplace issues because of their on-site presence. Resolving problems in timely and efficient ways has greater long-term potential for organizational success because the issues are addressed in the environment in which they occur.

In the context of immediate gratification, managers operate individual restaurants by focusing minimal effort toward planning and preparation and engaging problem resolution in reactionary ways (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). This reactionary type of behavior makes the focus of responsibility unclear, and managers are able to dispel or redirect accountability for issues elsewhere. With managers consistently focused on “putting out fires,” they are less inclined to think critically about long-term change potential, reflect on issues that need modification, or learn new and better ways to manage effectively.

In the fast food culture, transformational leadership might not have the same effect as evidenced in the military, political, and government sectors (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Fast food leaders seldom realize that their behavior is destructive until negative consequences, such as disgruntled employees, low production, and high turnover, occur. In addition, many of these fast food leaders are good people who either are just trying to deal with situations that they are not prepared for or are just acting and leading in ways modeled by their bosses (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). For the fast food industry, brick-and-mortar restaurants are where most income is generated. The primary behaviors of transformational leaders might fit well in the fast-paced and high-turnover environment that most fast food restaurants support. In order for transformational leaders to have a positive effect on fast food employees, they will likely have to use the tenets of

transformational leadership to create a more conducive environment for learning and leading to occur (Bass & Bass, 2008).

The pace of most lives across the globe has sped up because of technology (Bueno & Tubbs, 2004). This increased pace has driven people to rely on fast banking, fast shopping, fast living, and fast eating. The fast food industry is one practical way to get nourishment quickly and give busy people a way to meet the other responsibilities in their lives. The customers' need for immediate gratification is met by their use of fast food restaurants, which provide food quickly and conveniently (Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011). Fast food leaders sometimes take on this same mentality when leading and look only for quick fixes to problems, only to find that other problems soon arise (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Moving from problem to problem often leaves fast food leaders feeling that they are not making any progress in advancing employees' ability or competence (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The researcher believed that it was important to examine specific leadership behaviors that could equip leaders in this industry to behave in ways that can improve employee engagement and decrease turnover intent. This approach has the potential to enhance leadership in the fast food industry (Hofaidllhaoui & Chhinzer, 2014).

### **Summary and Transition**

This literature review provided a discussion of relevant research on effective leadership behaviors, employee engagement, and turnover intent in the fast food industry. By understanding how any of the five behaviors of transformational leadership (i.e., IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC) relate to employee engagement and turnover intent, it might be

possible to establish a foundation for future research among nonprofessional populations (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Throughout the literature review, I attempted to connect the theoretical foundation of this study with the literature. By gaining stronger knowledge about the relationship between any of the five transformational behaviors and the performance of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast food industry, a foundation for future research should be created.

A review of Burns's (1978) work on transformational leadership theory, followed by an expansion by Bass (1990), led to the MLQ, an instrument designed to measure the five different leadership behaviors of transformational leaders. By using a reliable and valid instrument like the MLQ, researchers might be able to discover the specific behaviors that leaders can use to increase the performance of followers, engage the followers, and increase the moral qualities of leaders (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders and their visions also are concerned with moral values and end values such as liberty, equality, and justice (Burns, 1978).

The review of the available literature identified a clear gap in research on the relationship between leadership style and the employee engagement and turnover intent of fast food hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers. This omission in the research is relevant because of the continual increase in the number of disengaged employees and the high turnover rate in the fast food industry. I attempted to narrow this gap in the literature by using the MLQ to measure and evaluate the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and fast food workers' engagement and turnover intent.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology of the study. I also discuss the research model for the study, introduced in Chapter 1, and the methodology for testing the hypotheses. In addition, the next chapter includes information about the research design and approach, the setting and sample, data collection methodology and instrumentation, data analysis, and procedures for protecting the participants. Chapter 4 provides a succinct review of the purpose of the study, the results of the data collection process, and an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 includes an interpretation and discussion of the results, along with suggestions for future research.

### Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between any of the five transformational leadership behaviors and the employee engagement and turnover intent of fast food hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers. The collection of data occurred in multiple fast food restaurants owned by individual owners. Previous researchers have established a link between transformational leadership in multiple business contexts and higher levels of employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014; Song et al., 2012). Therefore, the more engaged employees are, the less likely they are to support turnover intention.

Researchers have examined the individual variables of employee engagement and turnover intention, but few have considered whether any of the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC are associated with employee engagement and turnover intent (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Saboe et al., 2015). Moreover, using this same argument, few researchers have assessed these same five behaviors independently in the context of the fast food industry's hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers. Explanations of the study design, methodology, sample, sampling procedures, and measures of interest are presented in further detail. Data collection, the empirical analysis, and ethical considerations also are discussed.

#### **Research Design and Approach**

This method of empirical inquiry included an integration of the descriptive and explanatory quantitative data collected using a combination of a questionnaire and three instruments that I personally presented in a paper-based survey package. I collected the

data from employees working in restaurants in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. I then performed a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis to assess the relationship between any of the IVs of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC and the DVs of turnover intent and employee engagement (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2014).

Results of the study expanded on the extant literature pertaining to transformational leadership in the workplace, particularly the fast food, or hourly-wage, environment (Kwon, 2014; Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The goal was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between any of the five transformational leadership behaviors that served as the IVs and the DVs (i.e., criterion variables) of employee engagement and turnover intention. The intent of the investigation was to evaluate whether any specific transformational leadership behaviors (i.e., IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC) were related to variability in the outcome variables of interest, namely, employee engagement and turnover intention.

### **Setting and Sample**

The participants were hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers from 24 of 50 restaurants of a fast food franchise owned by a single owner. The company owns and is responsible for approximately 50 restaurants or franchises in Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and Florida. The total estimated number of employees working for the corporation is 1,000. The employees who completed the survey package report to the managers of the individual restaurants. The hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers (i.e., cashiers, sandwich makers, and dining attendants) evaluated the individual restaurant managers of the franchise locations that they worked under. Participants were selected



based upon their employment with the individual restaurants and their being of legal age to provide informed consent to participate. At no time did I collect individual information such as names of the participants. Each potential participant was selected by being an employee of a randomly selected restaurant. A requirement for employment in the fast food company is having the ability to read, write, and understand the English language. I signed the confidentiality agreement prior to collecting any data.

For the present analysis, I conducted an a priori power analysis using the G\*Power v.3.1.9.2 power assessment tool. The necessary sample size was sought using a fixed model linear multiple regression, based upon 95% power ( $\beta = 0.05$ ); effect size ( $f^2$ ) of 0.1; and a 95% confidence level, or an alpha level of .05 (see Figure 1).

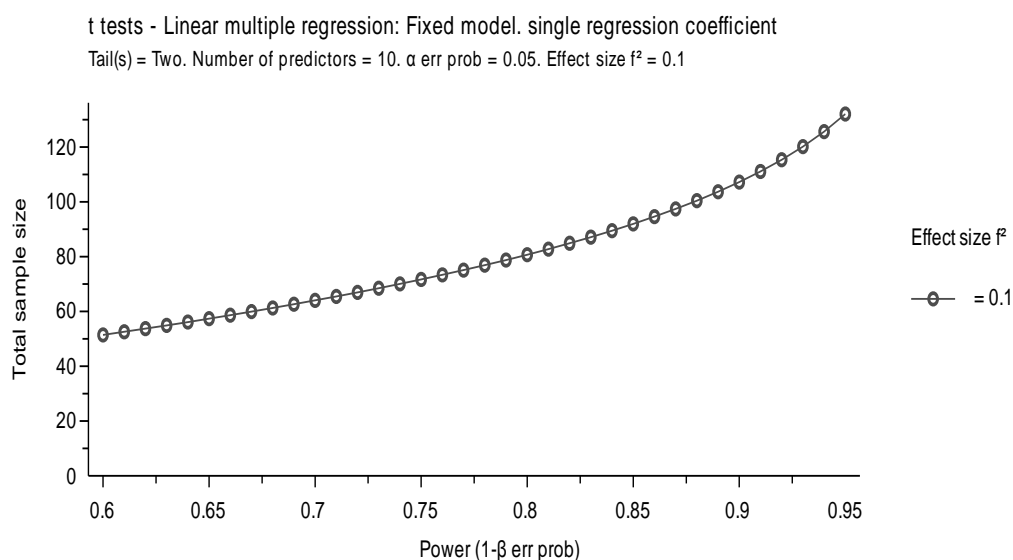


Figure 1. G\*Power sample size analysis results.

The linear regression model included five transformational behaviors that served as the predictor variables to predict the outcome variables (in different linear regression analyses) of employee engagement and turnover intention. The  $F$  test from the ANOVA

in the stepwise linear multiple regression analysis indicated significant findings, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The *F* ratio indicated that the linear model would improve the prediction of the criterion variable in comparison to the level of inaccuracy of the model (Field, 2009).

According to Green (1991), the number of participants required for a regression analysis to test the overall model is based on a minimum sample size of  $50 + 8k$ , with *k* representing the number of predictors in the analysis. To test the individual predictors in the analysis, Green suggested a minimum sample size of  $104 + k$ . Green recommended that researchers calculate both minimum sample sizes and use the one with the bigger value. In the present study, the sample size calculations were 90 and 109, respectively. Therefore, the minimum sample size was 109.

Field (2009) also asserted that sample size also is dependent on the size of the effect that a researcher is attempting to detect. If a researcher expects to find a large effect, the minimum sample size is 80 cases of data; if a researcher expects a medium effect, the minimum sample is 200 data cases; and if a researcher expects a small effect size, the minimum sample is 600 data cases. These estimates were based on the assumption of six or more predictors in the regression analysis. For the current study, I used these guidelines to interpret the effect size, or the magnitude of an effect.

### **Data Collection**

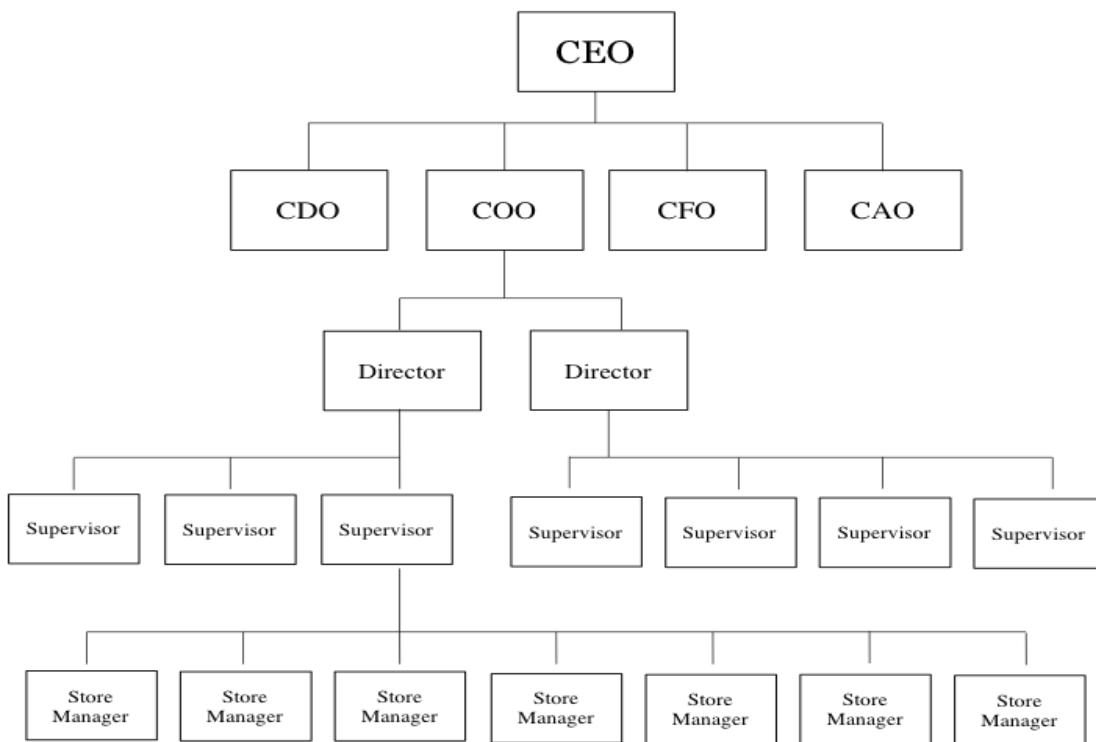
Before conducting any part of the study, I obtained approval to collect data from Walden University's IRB (approval #07-11-0370148). I gained access to the participants from a preidentified fast food company that employs hourly-wage, nonmanagement

employees. I obtained written permission from the owner/CEO to conduct the investigation. The fast food company is owned by a sole owner/CEO, who supervises the delegation of management at 50 individual restaurants. Participants were randomly selected from 24 of the 50 restaurants. Once the restaurants were identified, I obtained data from the workers who volunteered to participate in the study. Managers were informed by their supervisors that their restaurants might be participating in the study, which meant that their employees might be given the opportunity to join the study. The managers were given a range of dates indicating when I could arrive at their restaurants to conduct the study.

The opportunity for hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees to participate in the study was announced through a combination of flyers posted on the restaurants' employee bulletin boards and in-person communications with me on data collection days. The invitation flyer was e-mailed to the managers so that they could post them on the employee bulletin boards. The invitation flyer gave the workers time to consider whether to participate before I arrived at the restaurants to conduct the study. Through the flyer and in-person contact, potential participants were given a description of the purpose of the study and were informed of the confidentiality of all data that they shared in the survey package. My contact information was provided for anyone desiring more information or who might have had questions prior to participating.

According to information obtained from the owner/CEO, the fast food company is divided into two districts that are then further organized into seven areas. Each area has an average of seven restaurants, and supervisors are responsible for ensuring the proper

operations of each restaurant through one manager per restaurant. The 50 restaurant managers report to seven supervisors, who report to two directors. These two directors are responsible for reporting to the chief operations officer (COO) regarding the functioning of each area and the overall district (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Organizational structure of the fast food company.

Participation in the study was voluntary and based upon the individuals' employment status with the organization. All hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees at the randomly selected restaurants were eligible to participate. At no time did I collect personal information from any of the participants. All participants were selected based on being employed at 24 randomly selected restaurants. I visited each selected restaurant to conduct and oversee data collection. Upon arriving at each restaurant, I explained the

purpose of the visit and orally invited all hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees to participate.

Once an employee volunteered to join the study and gave the required verbal consent, I gave the participant the study materials in a paper-based format. Based upon the logistics of company operation; facility layout; and the limited availability of Internet technology to hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees, I determined that using a paper-based survey package was the most appropriate and efficient way to gather the data from the participants, all of whom were selected randomly from multiple restaurants. This process enhanced my ability to increase employee participation in the study by increasing the overall number of individuals available for voluntary participation.

Potential participants at the individual restaurants were notified by an invitation flyer posted on the employees' bulletin board prior to my arrival and verbally by me on the day of data collection about the option to join the study. The one-page information and invitation flyer included my contact information. A schedule listing a range of dates that I could be there was given to restaurant managers prior to data collection. I was on site during data collection to answer questions and to ensure confidentiality. I provided all necessary materials for each participant to complete the survey package (i.e., questionnaire, instruments, writing utensil, eraser, and a quiet place free from distraction). I used each restaurant manager's office as a confidential place to let the participants complete the survey package. Employment status was not affected by agreeing to participate in or choosing to opt out of the study.

Exclusionary criteria applied to individuals who were unable to participate independently because of language deficits, were of insufficient age to provide legal consent, were employed in general managerial positions, or did not work directly with the managers being evaluated at the selected restaurant locations. Such studies usually include short length of employment (e.g., < 6 months) as an exclusion criterion; however, because of the nature of the target population studied (mean tenure at turnover is approximately 4 months), this criterion was not feasible.

### **Measures**

I conducted this quantitative study to examine how any of the transformational leadership behaviors of IM, IS, IA, IB, and IC might predict employee engagement and turnover intent. The survey package included the demographics questionnaire asking for information about age, gender, length of employment with the organization, length of time working under current manager, and length of time working in the fast food industry, and three instruments: the MLQ (Avolio & Bass, 2004); the UWES (Schaufeli et al., 2006); and the TIM (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010).

#### **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

Participants completed the MLQ to assess only their managers' leadership behaviors. I used these data to determine the relative presence of transformational behaviors manifested by the managers and the impact on followers related to engagement and turnover intent. The MLQ has been used to evaluate the transformational; transactional; or laissez-faire (i.e., nonleadership) behaviors of managers or other individuals in managerial roles (Kantse, Miettunen, & Kyungas, 2007). It also has been

applied extensively in myriad internal ( $\alpha > .70$ ; Kantse et al., 2007) and external validation studies, and it has undergone continual revision since the construct was introduced by Bass in 1985 (as cited in Avolio et al., 2004).

The MLQ contains 45 items, with 20 of them focused on evaluating the transformational leadership behaviors of managers. The 20 items are then divided into five sections of four items for IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC, respectively. The five transformational leadership behaviors were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale of responses that range from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently, if not always*). The MLQ has a leader form and a rater form. In this study, just the rater form was used to allow the participant to describe the leadership styles of their managers as they perceived them. I used the participants' ratings to examine and measure the leadership behaviors of their managers. Participants answered questions as they pertained to their individual managers only (Avolio et al., 2004).

A normative sample ( $N = 27,285$ ) from Avolio and Bass's (2004) study showed individual behavior scores with means ranging from 2.77 to 2.94 and standard deviations of 0.70 to 0.78. Prior reliability estimates of the MLQ scale reported superior internal consistency for the transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles with a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .78 to .94 (Tejeda, Scandura, & Pillai, 2001). The test-retest reliability of the test ranged from 0.70 to 0.80.

### **Utrecht Work Engagement Scale**

I used the UWES to assess employees' level of engagement in the workplace (Hadassah & Cristian, 2013). The UWES is a 17-item instrument with three scales that

evaluate vigor (VI, six items); dedication (DE, five items); and absorption (AB, six items; Schaufeli et al., 2006). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), these three scales are internally consistent and stable across time, as well as invariant across different countries, where the total range for Finnish, Swedish, and Dutch countries was between .72 to .90 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Internal consistency estimates for the DE scale of the UWES ranged from .60 to .88, the AB scale varied between .85 and .92, and the variation on the overall scale spanned from .85 to .92 (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Since being introduced in 1999, the UWES has undergone numerous validity studies that have found it a valid and reliable tool for determining employees' work engagement, its negative relationship to burnout, and its role as a mediator in the motivation process (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Employee disengagement can be viewed as a symptom of job resources and motivation, as well as a collective phenomenon of the work environment, including leadership, and it can mean that employees are less likely to invest in the organizational goals or outcomes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

The UWES uses a 7-point Likert scale of responses that range of 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). The mean scale scores are computed by summing the individual items of the three scales and dividing by the total number of items included in each scale. The total scale score for the UWES is obtained by summing the items and dividing by the total number of items on the scale. For the purpose of this investigation, I called the UWES the "Work and Well-Being Survey" to reduce the possibility of participant bias interfering with the integrity of the findings. Normative data for the UWES ( $N = 12,161$ ) showed



mean scores in the three areas ranging from 3.77 to 4.33, with a total score mean of 4.10 and standard deviations ranging from 1.09 to 1.36.

### **Turnover Intentions Measure**

The TIM (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010) has been used to evaluate employees' intent to leave organizations in the near future. Employee turnover is the willful and conscious intent to leave organizations, whereas turnover intent is empirically linked to later behavioral turnover (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Job security is an important factor in the retention of workers, and individuals without such security in their jobs tend to be less involved with their jobs and have less organizational commitment (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010).

The TIM is a five-item assessment that is measured on a 7-point Likert scale of responses ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*); I later reversed the scale for negatively worded questions (Long et al., 2012). Higher scores on the questionnaire indicated a greater likelihood of turnover intent. Validity research into the TIM has been more limited than for the previous two instruments, but the content relationship between (anonymous) responses to questions such as "If I had different alternatives, I probably would not work in the same place as now" ( $r = .76$ ), and "I often think about applying to a job somewhere else" ( $r = .85$ ) and turnover intention has been logically self-evident (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010). Available normative values of the TIM ( $N = 260$ ) showed a mean aggregate response of 4.50 and standard deviation of 1.10 (Emberland & Rundmo, 2010).

## Data Analysis

Previous research has identified a relationship between transformational leadership and positive individual and organizational outcomes in diverse business contexts (i.e., finance and online retail companies; Hargis et al., 2011). The purpose of this investigation was to determine whether any of the five behaviors of transformational leadership would predict the engagement of fast food employees and the probability of turnover intent (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The literature has offered minimal knowledge in this area, so the hypotheses in the present study were exploratory in nature. I obtained the employees' self-rated perceptions of their managers' leadership behaviors and their resulting association with the interests of the organization. Two RQs and their hypotheses guided the study:

RQ1. Do fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement, as assessed by the UWES?

*H*<sub>01</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels do not predict their hourly wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement.

*H*<sub>a1</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement.

RQ2. Do fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent?

*H*<sub>02</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, do not predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent, as assessed by the TIM.

*H*<sub>a2</sub>: Fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent, as assessed by the TIM.

I used the data collected from the MLQ, the UWES, and the TIM to obtain the participants' perceptions of the transformational behaviors exhibited by their leaders in the restaurant environment in which they work, degree of employee engagement, and likelihood of turnover intent in the near future. I scored each section of the three instruments in the survey package by summing the individual items and averaging the responses of the participants. In regard to the MLQ, I used the combined means for the individual components that comprise transformational leadership to determine the overall score for transformational leadership. I entered the information into SPSS v.24.0 for analysis.

Transformational leadership behaviors that were analyzed were IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC. These five behaviors served as the IVs, or predictor variables, in the linear regression models performed to assess the relationship between the IVs and the DVs. I tested the five behaviors to determine how much variability they individually contributed to the regression model toward the DVs of employee engagement and turnover intention.

### Statistical Analysis

I conducted descriptive statistics to assess the points of central tendency, such as the mean and standard deviation for each demographic variable. Frequency analyses and percentile rank allowed me to determine the relative importance of each demographic variable. To support acceptance or rejection of the null hypotheses, the confidence level, or the  $p$ -value indicating the presence or absence of significance in the study, had to meet or be less than .05.

In a multiple regression analysis, the  $p$ -value of the overall model indicates whether there is a significant relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. An overall  $p$ -value  $> .05$  indicates that the relationship between variables is not significant, and an overall  $p$ -value  $< .05$  indicates that the relationship is significant. A  $p$ -value  $< .01$  or  $.001$  indicates that the relationship is more significant and highly significant, respectively.

The  $R^2$  value indicates the level of criterion variability explained by the best set of predictor variables, or those predictors that produce the best model that fits the data. The value of  $R$  shows a positive or a negative relationship between the criterion and predictor variables. A negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship between variables, and a positive correlation points to the same directional relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. In this study, the magnitude of the correlational relationship was categorized as low (.01), medium (.03), or high (.05), respectively. An independent-samples  $t$  test did not apply to the study because more than two groups were tested in the analysis;  $t$  tests require two groups.

To assess the relationship of each predictor variable to each DV, I conducted a series of multiple linear regression analyses (Field, 2009). The researcher entered the demographics variables (i.e., age, gender, length of time working under current manager, length of time working for current employer, and length of time working in the fast food industry) in the first step of the regression analysis. To control for the aforementioned components and different restaurant locations in the statistical inquiry, I conducted a stepwise regression analysis, where the variables were excluded from the analysis as the significance level of the equation decreases. Therefore, in each subsequent step of the analysis, an IV was removed or excluded from the equation model. The criterion variables, or DVs (i.e., employee engagement and turnover intent), were analyzed individually in regard to the five transformational leadership behaviors. The alpha level of significance was set at .05 for each analysis.

Each regression model assessed the relative association of the five transformational leadership behaviors in a stepwise fashion (e.g., IC) and one DV (e.g., employee engagement) using the stepwise analysis function on SPSS to remove the weakest correlated variable with the DV in each model. The separate regression analyses involved the five transformational leadership behaviors and the DVs of employee engagement and turnover intention. The first analysis used employee engagement as the DV. The second analysis used turnover intent as the DV.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of the analyses was to determine how these behaviors predicted employee engagement and turnover intent in the near future based on job role and management conditions. To test the hypotheses identified in

Chapter 2, I evaluated the data using a stepwise multiple linear regression analyses to assess how transformational leadership behaviors predicted variability in the outcome of interest and to find the best predictive model for the data.

### **Informed Consent and Protection of Human Participants**

At the suggestion of Walden University's IRB, implied consent was used for this study. To comply with this suggestion, I started each discussion with a summary explanation of the study and the process. I then presented the potential participants with the informed consent form so that they could read it and ask questions if they desired. All participants were offered copies of their individual consent forms for their own records. Once the participants voluntarily gave their consent to join the study, I gave them access to the paper-based survey package. To maintain the privacy of the participants and the confidentiality of the data, I assigned numeric identifiers to the participants. This anonymity helped to reduce the likelihood of the Hawthorne effect. I did not anticipate any risks to the participants for being in the study. Implied consent included background information about the study, completion of the survey package, measures taken to ensure confidentiality, the voluntary nature of participation, and any other relevant ethical considerations. I gave the participants my contact information in case they needed to discuss any further concerns or ask questions during the duration of the study. Once I discussed the participation process with participants, they received the survey package, comprising the demographics form, the MLQ, the UWES, and the TIM. I reviewed the research design and methodology with the participants prior to collecting any data so that they understood the nature of the study.

### **Summary and Transition**

Included in Chapter 3 was information relevant to the research design, methodology, target population and sampling, and other procedures in the study. This chapter also included a discussion of the reliability and validity of the instruments used in the study, and the nature of their use. I explained the design and subsequent management and analysis of the collected data, along with any potential benefits and risks of participation. Chapter 4 includes a brief review of the purpose of the study, the results of the data collection process, and an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation and discussion of the results, along with suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 4: Results

Leadership characteristics of the general managers of fast food restaurants owned by a single franchisee were examined to determine whether leaders exhibited behaviors related to transformational leadership and how the presence or absence of these behaviors might predict employee engagement and turnover intention. The study was conducted to help researchers and employers to design potential training programs that could educate fast food leaders on ways to lead that increase employee engagement and decrease turnover intent. The theoretical framework used to guide this study was based on Avolio and Bass's (2004) characterization of transformational leadership.

This chapter presents an overall analysis of the findings. Chapter 1 introduced the study, including definitions of key terminology and the purpose of the study. Chapter 2 included a review of literature relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. The methodology was described in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 provides a description and explanation of the research findings and provides details of the data collection techniques approved by Walden University's IRB. Finally, participant assessments included in the study are evaluated, and data analysis findings are displayed.

### **Data Collection**

After obtaining approval from Walden University's IRB to conduct the study, I contacted the participating corporation to begin collecting data over the following month. Working with the participating organization's COO, I developed a schedule to visit each randomly selected restaurant. I traveled to 24 restaurants in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, and Florida over a 1-month period. Individual participants were employees



of the randomly selected restaurants who met the participation criteria: They had to be able to speak English fluently; be hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees; and be a minimum of 18 years of age on the day of data collection. Participation was voluntary. Prior to my arrival, each restaurant manager posted a flyer on the employees' bulletin board. I provided the COO with the flyer to be forwarded to each restaurant manager for posting. The COO gave specific instructions to the restaurant managers to post the flyer prior to the arrival of any hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees for their shifts.

### **Response Rate**

The target population comprised 360 hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees across 24 restaurants. A total of 119 employees constituted the total number of available employees working at the 24 restaurants at the time of the study. I collected data only from workers on shift during the collection time. Survey packages were distributed to all hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees who were willing to voluntarily provide verbal consent to participate in the study. I offered the survey to 119 employees with 24 different restaurant managers; 116 (97.5%) accepted the offer to participate. Exactly 52.6% ( $N = 61$ ) were under the director of operations west, and 47.4% ( $N = 55$ ) were under the director of operations east. The average number of respondents per restaurant was 5.8 employees (see Table 1).

Table 1

#### *Summary of Work and Well-Being Survey Response Rate*

Work and well-being	Total
Participants available	119
Surveys returned	116
Response rate (%)	97.5
No. of restaurant managers	24

### Sample Demographics

I collected demographics data from all 116 participants to serve as control variables during analysis procedures (see Table 2). Participants ranged in age from 18 years to 54 years ( $M = 26.54$ ,  $SD = 9.91$ ). The sample comprised 37.9% male ( $n = 44$ ) and 62.1% female ( $n = 72$ ) participants. The time under their current managers ranged from 1 month to 24 years. The average time working under their current managers was 1.54 years ( $SD = 2.67$ ). The range of time working in the fast food industry was between 1 month and 38 years ( $M = 6.17$ ,  $SD = 7.82$ ). The average amount of time working for the current company was 2.21 years ( $SD = 3.24$ ).

Table 2

#### *Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Max	Min	Range
Age	26.54	9.91	54.00	18.00	36.00
Years under current manager	1.54	2.67	24.00	.08	23.92
Years worked in fast food industry	6.17	7.82	38.00	.08	37.92
Years worked for company	2.21	3.24	24.00	.08	23.92

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistical evaluation of the IVs is presented in Table 3. The mean of the data provides information related to the central tendency of the overall data collection process (Field, 2009). The standard deviation provides information on the variability of the data around the mean. The highest transformational behavior rated was IA ( $M = 3.086$ ,  $SD = 0.997$ ), followed by IB ( $M = 2.726$ ,  $SD = 0.938$ ), IM ( $M = 3.011$ ,  $SD = 0.902$ ); IS ( $M = 2.716$ ,  $SD = 1.029$ ); and IC ( $M = 2.748$ ,  $SD = 0.904$ ).

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Transformational Leadership*

Leadership	<i>M</i>	% below norm	<i>SD</i>
Idealized influence			
IA	3.086	55%	0.997
IB	2.726	49%	0.938
IM	3.011	55%	0.902
IS	2.716	48%	1.029
IC	2.748	45%	0.904

*Note.* Valid *N* = 116

IA = Idealized Influence Attributes

IB = Idealized Influence Behaviors

IM = Inspirational Motivation

IS = Intellectual Stimulation

IC = Individualized Consideration

As presented in Table 4, the average score for employee engagement was 72.991 (*SD* = 15.262). The possible range of values for employee engagement was from 0 to 102. The actual range for employee engagement was from 27 to 102. Results for turnover intention were a mean of 16.431 and a standard deviation of 8.422. The possible range of values for turnover intention was from 0 to 30. The actual range for turnover intention was 0 to 30.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention*

Criterion variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Employee engagement	72.991	15.262
Turnover intention	16.431	8.422

*Note.* Valid *N* = 116

### Correlation Analysis

I performed bivariate correlations to determine whether significant relationships were evident among the five transformational leadership behaviors, employee

engagement, turnover intention, and the demographic variables. Results indicated that IA ( $r = .370, p < .001$ ); IB ( $r = .383, p < .001$ ); IM ( $r = .374, p < .001$ ); IS ( $r = .409, p < .001$ ); and IC ( $r = .366, p < .001$ ) shared statistically significant positive relationships with employee engagement. Results also showed that IA ( $r = .418, p < .001$ ); IB ( $r = .288, p < .01$ ); IM ( $r = .382, p < .001$ ); IS ( $r = .454, p < .001$ ); and IC ( $r = .351, p < .001$ ) shared statistically significant positive relationships with turnover intention. Age was significantly positively related to turnover intention ( $r = .214, p < .05$ ); years worked in fast food industry ( $r = .693, p < .001$ ); years at the company ( $r = .371, p < .001$ ); and years under current manager ( $r = .222, p < .05$ ).

### **Test of Assumptions**

Prior to conducting a stepwise linear regression analysis, the assumptions of regression were required to be tested and shown to be accurate. First, all predictors were required to be dichotomous or quantitative, and the outcome variable was required to be quantitative. Second, the relationship that I measured was expected to be linear, so the mean values of the outcome had to lie along a straight line at each change or increment of change in the predictors. Third, the data were analyzed for independence of errors. Fourth, the homoscedasticity of residuals was evaluated and confirmed. Fifth, the data were checked for the absence of multicollinearity. It was pertinent to validate the assumptions of regression to evaluate the overall goodness of fit of the model, determine the amount of variability in the criterion variables explained by the predictors, and determine whether the research hypotheses could be accepted or rejected based on the

findings from the regression analysis. If any assumptions of regression were violated, additional statistical testing procedures would have been required.

### **Independence of Errors**

The Durbin-Watson statistic for independence of errors was assessed for each criterion variable. The statistic evaluates whether the residuals in the model are independent from one another. For the number of predictors and the sample size of this study, the Durbin-Watson statistical boundaries were  $d_L = 1.57$  and  $d_U = 1.78$  (Durbin & Watson, 1951). It was calculated as 2.233 for employee engagement and 1.891 for turnover intention (see Table 5). Both of the obtained values of Durbin-Watson statistics in the regression model exceeded the upper boundary, indicating no correlation between the residuals. Based on the recommendations in Durbin and Watson's (1951) original paper, the Durbin-Watson statistics obtained in the regression analyses confirmed that the assumption of independence of errors was tenable.

Table 5

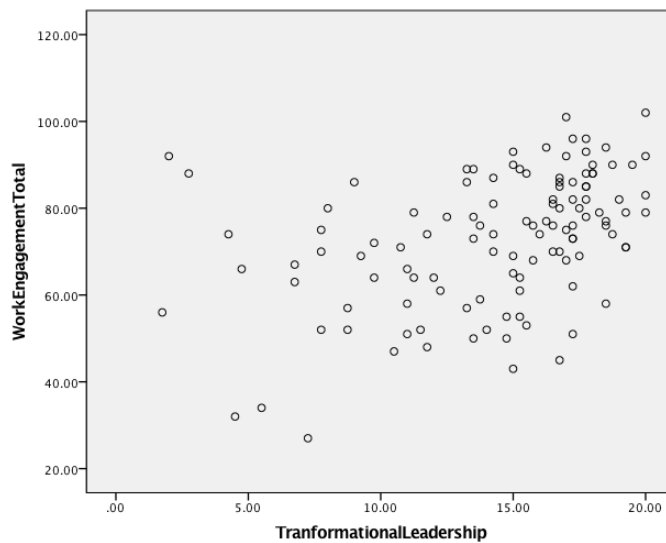
#### *Assumptions: Independence of Errors*

Criterion variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	Adj. <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	SE of the estimate	Durbin-Watson statistic
Employee engagement	.409	.167	.160	13.98902	2.233
Turnover intention	.454	.206	.199	7.53836	1.891

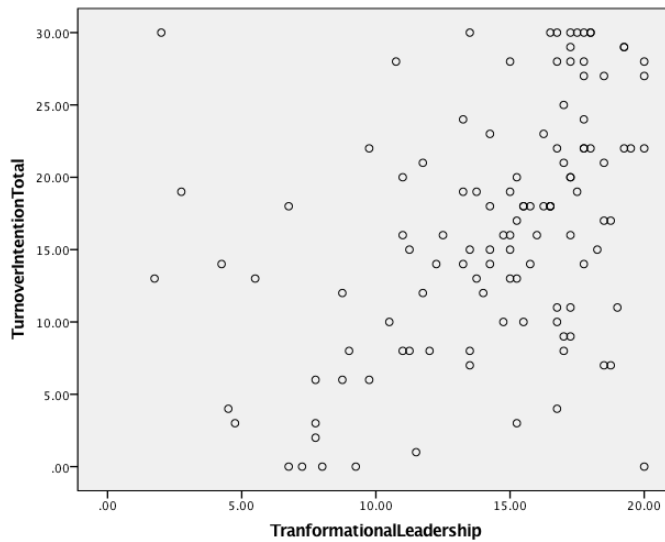
### **Linear Relationship**

Based on the assumption of regression, the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables was expected to be linear without the presence of significant outliers (Field, 2009). If such a relationship is linear, then the mean values of the criterion variable appear along a linear line at each increment of change in the predictor variables.

To evaluate the linear relationship between the predictor variable of transformational leadership and each criterion variable, a bivariate scatterplot was conducted to validate the linear relationship. Figure 3 demonstrates a clear linear relationship between the predictor of transformational leadership and employee engagement and turnover intention. Figure 4 demonstrates a clear linear relationship between the predictor of transformational leadership and turnover intention.



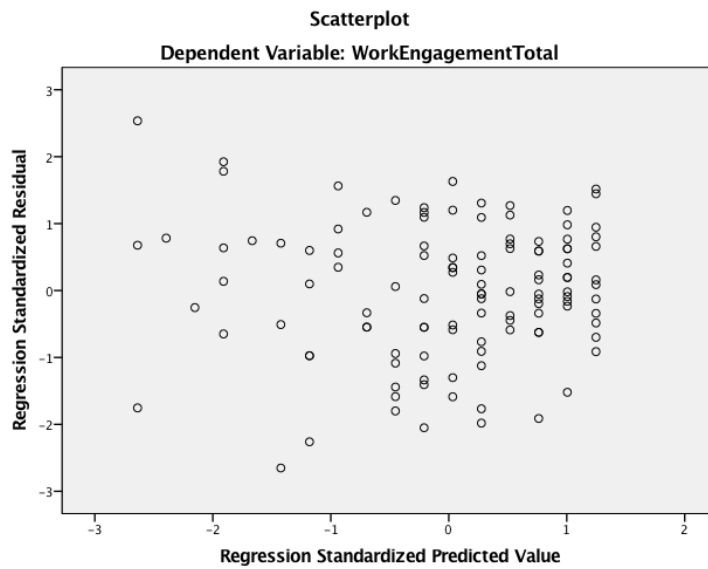
*Figure 3.* Scatterplot: Transformational leadership and employee engagement.



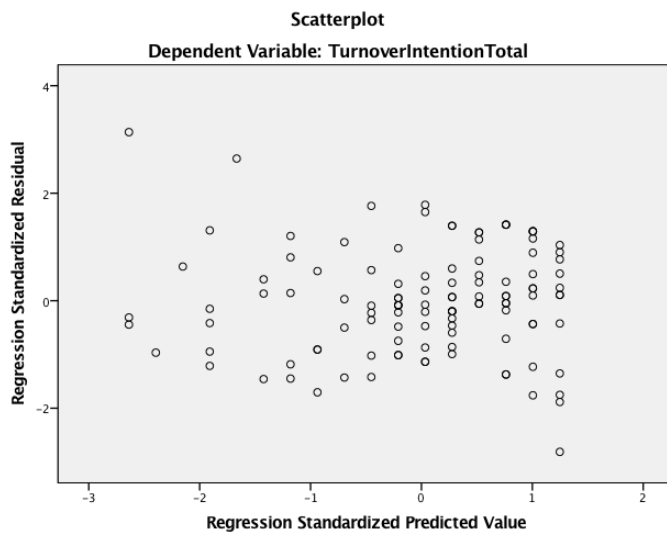
*Figure 4.* Scatterplot: Transformational leadership and turnover intention.

### **Homoscedasticity of Residuals**

The assumption of homoscedasticity of residuals means that the residuals at each level of the predictor variables have the same variance. The assumption also indicates that the variance of the residuals should remain constant. To test that this assumption had been met, a plot of the standardized residuals against the standardized predicted values was necessary. If the graph appeared to funnel out, then heteroscedasticity, or unequal variances, might have been present. If the points appeared to be randomly and evenly dispersed throughout the plot, then the assumption of linearity and homoscedasticity had been met. Based on Figures 5 and 6, the assumption of homoscedasticity of residuals had been met, which was indicative of the residuals being evenly spread across the predicted values.



*Figure 5.* Assumptions: Homoscedasticity of residuals of employee engagement.



*Figure 6.* Assumptions: Homoscedasticity of residuals of turnover intention.

### **Multicollinearity**

Multicollinearity occurs when there is a perfect linear relationship between two or more predictors (Field, 2009). Perfect collinearity among variables is problematic because it is difficult to ascertain which predictors are contributing to variance in the



criterion variable, making the assessment of the individual importance of predictors difficult. To evaluate for the presence or absence of multicollinearity among predictors, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance statistic can be used. The VIF indicates whether an individual predictor is strongly correlated with any other predictors. A VIF substantially greater than 1 indicates that multicollinearity might be biasing the regression model, and a VIF greater than 10 is indicative of significant concern. A tolerance statistic lower than 0.2 or 0.1 also is a problematic value. In the present regression analyses, the VIF and the tolerance statistic indicated that no multicollinearity among the predictors was present (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Collinearity and Tolerance*

Model	VIF	Tolerance
IS	1.000	1.000
IA	2.470	.405
IB	2.207	.453
IM	2.050	.488
IC	2.060	.485

**Normally Distributed Errors**

According to Field (2009), in a regression model, the residuals in the model are random and normally distributed. If the errors in the model are normally distributed, the differences between the actual model and the observed data are zero or close to zero. In other words, if the model fits the sample data well, then the residuals, or differences in the predicted outcome and the observed outcome, will be small.

According to the regression analysis in the current study, six cases, that is, 3, 26, 35, 49, 103, and 113, might have been cause for concern in the model. To further

investigate these cases, I used Cook's distance, which measures the overall influence an individual case has on a model. The mean for Cook's distance was 0.0567 ( $Mdn = 0.0339$ , range = 0.17418), and none of the cases had a value greater than 1, which meant that none of the values had an undue influence over the regression model. Values for Cook's distance were within the range of 3 times the average (0.0765), confirming that no cases had an undue influence over the regression model (see Tables 7 & 8).

Table 7

*Normal Distribution (Outliers) for Employee Engagement Regression Model*

Case no.	Standardized residual	Employee engagement total	Predicted value	Residual value
3	-2.261	34.0	65.6230	-31.62304
35	-2.051	43.0	71.6849	-28.68494
49	-2.653	27.0	64.1076	-37.10756
113	2.536	92.0	56.5302	35.46981

DV: Work engagement total.

Table 8

*Normal Distribution (Outliers) for Turnover Intention Regression Model*

Case no.	Standardized residual	Turnover intention total	Predicted value	Residual value
26	-2.812	0	21.1977	-21.19769
103	2.644	30	10.0648	19.93517
113	3.137	30	6.3539	23.64612

DV: Turnover intention total.

For the purpose of conducting inferential statistics and evaluating prediction errors, it was necessary for the data to be normally distributed. Figures 7 and 8 demonstrate the normality of the data using a histogram and a normal distribution curve for each criterion variable. The figures also include a normal P-P plot of the regression standardized residual compared to employee engagement and turnover intention. Each

graph shows that the data were normally distributed and that this was the final step in validating the assumptions of regression.

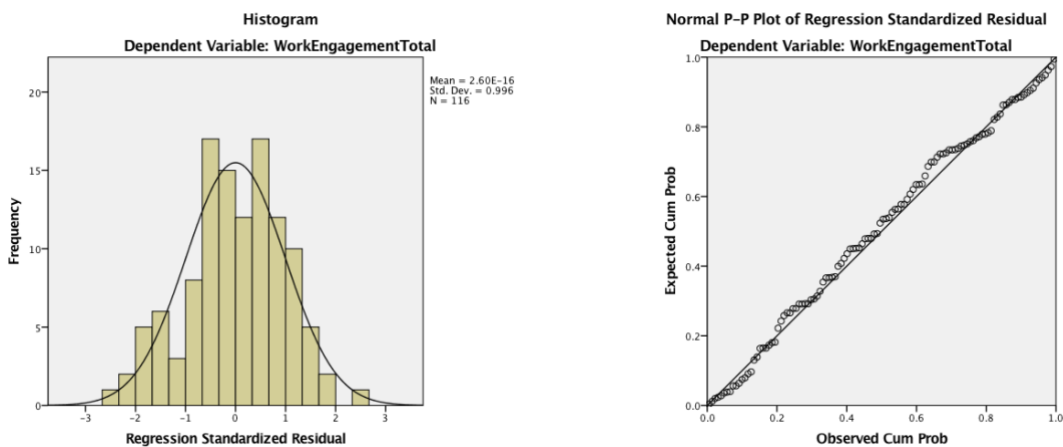


Figure 7. Normal distribution for employee engagement.

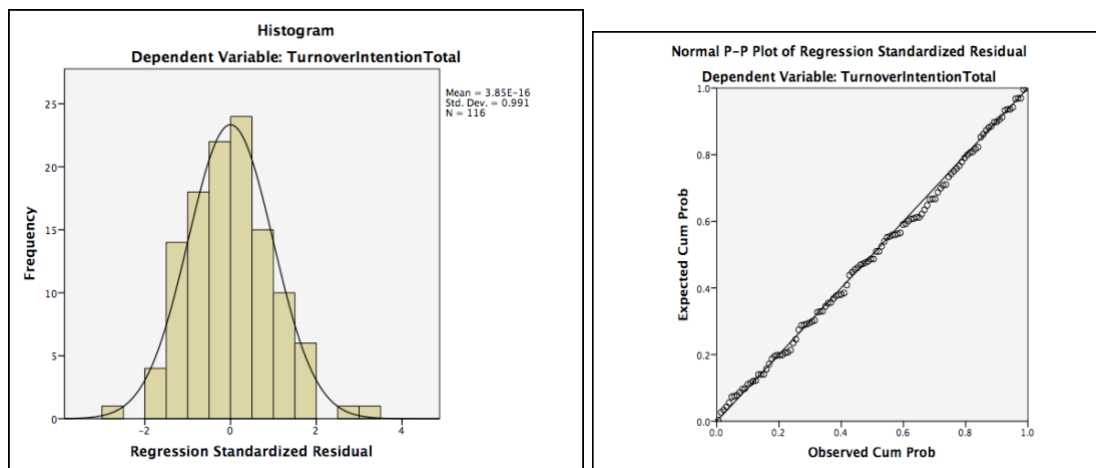


Figure 8. Normal distribution for turnover intention.

### Regression Analysis

Following the review of the assumptions of regression, I conducted a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis. A two-step multiple stepwise regression analysis was performed, with the first step consisting of demographics variables and geographic

location and the second step consisting of the five transformational leadership behaviors, or predictor variables. The first step was conducted to enter the demographics variables as control variables, and the SPSS enter function was used so that no variables would be excluded. The demographics variables included information from the demographics questionnaire. The second step was performed to assess the five transformational leadership behaviors as predictor variables using the stepwise SPSS function.

Descriptive statistics and a stepwise multiple linear regression were conducted to assess the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. The IVs were the transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, IC. The DVs were employee engagement and turnover intention. The demographics variables entered as control variables in the analysis were employee gender, employee age, years worked under current manager, years worked in the fast food industry, and years working for the company. Geographic location was added as a control variable in the analysis.

To answer each RQ, I analyzed the data using a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis to determine the amount of variability that each predictor variable contributed to the criterion variables. The assumptions of regression (i.e., independence of errors, linear relationship, homoscedasticity, absence of multicollinearity, and normally distributed errors) were met prior to the interpretation of the stepwise multiple linear regression model.

### **Research Question 1**

RQ1: Do fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers'

employee engagement, as assessed by the UWES? Hypothesis 1 predicted that fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels would predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' employee engagement. To evaluate Hypothesis 1, I entered the five control variables of age, gender, length of time working under current manager, length of time working for current employer, and length of time working in the fast food industry into the first step of the multiple linear regression with an enter command. The five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC were entered into the second step with a stepwise command.

Results from Step 2, which included the behaviors of transformational leadership, were significant. Results indicated that the only significant predictor was IS, which accounted for 15.9% of the variability in employee engagement (see Table 9). All other transformational behaviors (IA, IB, IM, IC) were excluded by the stepwise model based on their significance level ( $p > .05$ ). Results indicated that Step 1, which included demographic characteristics and geographic location, was not significant,  $p > .05$ . However, based on the value of  $R^2$ , 3.9% of the variability in employee engagement was accounted for by the demographic variables and geographic location.

Table 9

*Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression: Criterion Variable Employee Engagement*

Model	<i>R</i>	$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$R^2$ change	<i>SE</i> of estimate	Sig.
Demographic variables & geographic location	.197	.039	-.014	.039	15.36853	.622
Employee engagement	.445	.198	.146	.159	14.10403	.000

The test of Hypothesis 1 resulted in rejection of Null Hypothesis 1. A stepwise multiple linear regression was conducted for the prediction of employee engagement

based on employee gender, age, years worked under current manager, years worked for the company, years worked in the fast food industry, and geographic location, and the measure of the five transformational leadership behaviors, as assessed by the MLQ. The assumptions of independence of errors, linearity, homoscedasticity of residuals, normally distributed errors, and the absence of multicollinearity were met. The transformational leadership behavior of IS statistically significantly predicted employee engagement,  $F(7,108) = 3.809$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .146$  (see Table 9). For the model, intellectual stimulation,  $t(108) = 4.628$ ,  $p < .001$ , was the only significant predictor (see Table 10).

Table 10

*Regression Coefficients: Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement*

Model	B	SE	$\beta$	Sig.
(Constant)	51.414	5.469		.000
Employee gender	3.752	2.771	.120	.179
Employee age	.170	.197	.110	.391
Years current manager	-.275	.916	-.048	.764
Years fast food	-.087	.253	-.045	.731
Years company	-.019	.761	-.004	.980
Geographic location	2.353	2.707	.077	.387
Intellectual stimulation	6.039	1.305	.407	.000

## Research Question 2

RQ2: Do fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent? Hypothesis 2 predicted that fast food restaurant managers' transformational leadership behavior levels, as assessed by the MLQ, would predict their hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers' turnover intent, as assessed by the TIM. To assess Hypothesis 2, I entered the six control variables into the first step of the multiple linear regression with an enter command. The five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC were entered in the

second step with a stepwise command.

Results of Step 2, which included the behaviors of transformational leadership, were significant, indicating that the only significant predictor was IS. This predictor accounted for 19.6% of the variability in turnover intention (see Table 11). All other transformational behaviors (IA, IB, IM, IC) were excluded by the stepwise model based on their significance level ( $p > .05$ ). Results indicated that in Step 1, the only significant predictor of employee engagement was the age of the employee. Furthermore,  $R^2$  indicated 4.6% of the variability in employee engagement was accounted for by the age of the employee.

Table 11

*Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression: Criterion Variable Turnover Intention*

Model	$R$	$R^2$	Adj. $R^2$	$R^2$ change	SE of estimate	Sig
Age	.214	.046	.038	.046	8.26188	.021
Turnover intention	.492	.242	.228	.196	7.39851	.000

The test of Hypothesis 2 resulted in rejection of Null Hypothesis 2. A stepwise multiple linear regression was conducted for the prediction of employee engagement based on employee gender, age, years worked under current manager, years worked for the company, years worked in the fast food industry, and geographic location, and the measure of the five transformational leadership behaviors, as assessed by the MLQ. The assumptions of independence of errors, linearity, homoscedasticity of residuals, normally distributed errors, and absence of multicollinearity were met. The transformational leadership behavior of IS statistically significantly predicted turnover intention,  $F(2, 113) = 18.004$ ,  $p < .001$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .228$  (see Table 11). The age of the employee also was a

significant predictor of turnover intention,  $F(1, 114) = 5.493, p = .021, \text{Adj. } R^2 = .038$  (see Table 11). For the model, age,  $t(113) = 2.313, p = .023$ , and intellectual stimulation,  $t(113) = 5.400, p < .001$ , were the two significant predictors (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Regression Coefficients: Transformational Leadership and Turnover Intention*

Model	B	SE	$\beta$	Sig
(Constant)	2.305	2.617		.380
Employee gender	1.448	1.478	.084	.330
Employee age	.161	.070	.190	.023
Years current manager	-.042	.489	-.013	.931
Years fast food	.009	.135	.008	.946
Years company	-.096	.406	-.037	.813
Geographic location	-.097	1.444	-.006	.946
Intellectual stimulation	3.625	.671	.443	.000

### Summary and Transition

A stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict the relationship of transformational leadership behaviors on employee engagement and turnover intention, which served as the DVs in the study. The assumptions of multiple regression necessary to evaluate the data were assessed and were found to be satisfactory for the completion of the analysis. Six outliers were present in the data, but these outliers were determined to not be unduly influential over the regression model. Transformational leadership added predictive power to the stepwise regression model for each criterion variable. As it pertained to employee engagement, transformational leadership, particularly IS, accounted for 16.7% of the variance in employee engagement scores, and the demographics variables contributed an additional 3.3% to the outcome. As it pertained to turnover intention, transformational leadership, particularly IS, accounted for



19.6% of the variability in employee engagement scores, and the demographics variables contributed an additional 4.6% to the outcome.

Transformational leadership statistically significantly accounted for variability in employee engagement and turnover intention at the .05 significance level. I conducted bivariate correlations to determine whether significant relationships were present among the five transformational leadership behaviors, employee engagement, turnover intention, and the demographic variables. Results indicated that IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC shared a statistically significant positive relationship with employee engagement as well as turnover intention. Age was significantly positively related to turnover intention, years worked in fast food, years at the company, and years under current manager.

After controlling for employee gender, age, years worked under current manager, years worked for the company, years worked in the fast food industry, and geographic location, it was found that IS has a statistically significant relationship to employee engagement and turnover intention. The other four transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, and IC were not significant and were excluded from the analysis based on the stepwise function.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the RQs and hypotheses, along with an interpretation of the findings. Limitations of the study are discussed, and recommendations for future research are offered. Conclusions and implications of this study also are presented.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Employee engagement and turnover intention are historical problems within the fast-food industry (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The current leadership model in the fast food industry is targeted toward the immediate resolution of issues, which fails to facilitate leader growth and development, and contributes to employee dissatisfaction. Despite high employee turnover and lower employee engagement levels, the current fast food leadership model has been shown to be effective, but not as profitable as it could be because of its significant detriment to the organizational structure.

Fast food restaurant managers are poorly trained in leadership skills, and based on this training deficit, they tend to react to problems from a short-term perspective rather than look for long-range solutions (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). As a result, the organization suffers financially and lacks a stable workforce. Employees also experience personal setbacks such as loss of income, lack of upward mobility in the organization, and a potential gap in employee-related benefits. These consequences prevent employees from gaining seniority, securing more vacation time, reaping better medical benefits, and obtaining other associated perks that come with higher level positions and/or experience. In a highly competitive business environment, the organization would benefit from higher employee engagement, which would enhance productivity and reduce turnover, both of which would allow for higher levels of training and a more stable workforce.

In this exploratory study of fast food employees and the effectiveness of present leadership behaviors within this industry and their relationship to employee engagement and turnover intent, I performed a stepwise multiple regression analysis to determine

whether the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC would significantly predict employee engagement and turnover intention. The assumptions of regression were assessed and determined to be adequate for the data analysis. It was determined that the six outliers were not unduly influential on the regression model. IS, which significantly predicted variability in employee engagement and turnover intention, accounted for 19.8% of the variability in employee engagement and 25.0% of the variability in turnover intention. The demographic variables, along with geographic location, accounted for 3.9% of the variability in employee engagement and 6.4% of the variability in turnover intention. IS was significant for both criterion variables at the .05 and .01 alpha levels, respectively. None of the other four transformational leadership behaviors significantly predicted either turnover intent or employee engagement outcomes.

The findings and interpretation for each RQ are provided in this chapter. The implications of those findings also are presented on theoretical, practical, and methodological bases. The chapter then covers the limitations of the study, offers recommendations based on the findings, and discusses the implications for social change.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The purpose of the study was to determine whether transformational leadership predicts the employee engagement and turnover intention of hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees in the fast food industry. In this study, I sought to evaluate whether the framework of transformational leadership was present in the fast food industry. The study involved the use of quantitative methods. The predictor variables

were the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC, and the criterion variables were employee engagement and turnover intention. The target population of hourly-wage, nonmanagement fast-food employees were provided by a fast food organization with a sole owner and operator of 50 restaurants across the southeastern United States.

RQ1 inquired whether fast food managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predicted the employee engagement of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers. Employee engagement is a significant predictor of employee efficiency, productivity, and sustainability (Jha & Kumar, 2016). Transformational leadership has been linked to improved employee and organizational outcomes (Bass & Bass, 2008). In the current study, 15.9% of the variation in employee engagement was related to IS. The other four dimensions of transformational leadership were not significant predictors.

RQ2 examined whether fast food managers' transformational leadership behavior levels predicted the turnover intention of hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers. Turnover intention is related to work dissatisfaction, lack of communication with management, and the seeking of alternative employment opportunities (Hofaidhllaoui & Chhinzer, 2015). Results indicated that 19.6% of the variance in turnover intention was related to IS, which was a significant predictor of employee engagement. The other four dimensions of transformational leadership were not significant predictors. Employee age was also a significant predictor for turnover intention.

Results indicated that IS was a statistically significant predictor of employee engagement and turnover intention at the .05 alpha level. The combined demographic

variables were less meaningful than IS to the variability in the criterion variables. Findings suggest that further research is warranted regarding the current leadership model used in the fast food industry. The results might broaden the current body of knowledge of current versus recommended model of leadership behaviors and how it relates to hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers and the leadership behaviors that might get the best performance, engagement, and longevity of employees. (Avolio & Bass, 1991; Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

### **Theoretical Implications**

#### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Leadership in organizations is a significant component that predicts whether employees are engaged at work and whether they intend to remain with the organizations (Avolio & Bass, 1991). Organizations that include specific programs to enhance engagement tend to have more motivated employees who are less likely to endorse turnover intentions (Jha & Kumar, 2016). This study focused on the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC and their relationship to employee engagement and turnover intention. Findings suggest that leadership style can significantly impact employee performance and can lead to positive or negative outcomes for employees and the organizations.

Transformational leadership theory has become a focus of primary interest in leadership research because of its enhancement of employee and organizational outcomes (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Transformational leaders focus on empowering and inspiring employees by providing employees with opportunities for development and advancement

(Avolio & Bass, 1991). Transformational leadership behaviors, that is, IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC, result in more engaged employees who are invested in their jobs.

Transformational leaders embody the ideals that followers can identify with (Bass & Bass, 2008). Increased levels of employee engagement and reduced turnover intention are important factors from a leadership perspective because both factors, when left unconsidered, can lead to instability in terms of job security for employees and poorer financial outcomes for organizations (Avolio & Bass, 1991). Transformational behaviors are related to employee engagement and turnover intention.

**Idealized attributes.** Leaders who embody IA instill pride in their followers (Bass, 1985). These leaders behave in ways that develop respect, look to the group needs rather than their own needs, and show followers that they have confidence in their decision-making powers during daily activities and functions. Results did not support IA as a significant predictor of employee engagement or turnover intention. However, bivariate correlation analyses indicated that IA were positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention.

In the present study, IA did not significantly predict employee engagement and turnover intention. It seems plausible that restaurant managers lack the appropriate training to understand the process of instilling pride in and garnering respect from their followers. Restaurant managers in the fast food industry might be lacking the training and education that would allow them to lead in ways that gain the respect of their followers (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). The ability of leaders to behave in ways that gain the employees'

respect is wanted from followers, but the leaders in this study did not display those characteristics. Even though IA were correlated, they were not significant in this study.

**Idealized behaviors.** Leaders who incorporate IB into their leadership style discuss important values and beliefs with followers, encourage them to show a definitive sense of purpose in their work, and create a work environment where followers take time to consider the ethical implications of their decisions (Bass, 1985). Leaders who demonstrate IB encourage followers to have a collective identity that considers the goals of the organizational mission. Results did not support IB as a significant predictor of employee engagement or turnover intention. However, bivariate correlation analyses indicated that IB were positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention. In order for leaders to embody IB, they must possess established values and beliefs to derive purpose in their work (Burns, 1978). In contrast, leaders who do have these characteristics can coach or train their employees in these same values, beliefs, and standards of conduct. Leading with high standards might result in employees who behave with high standards and prioritize the organizational mission.

**Individualized consideration.** Leaders who use IC attend to the individual needs of followers and their desire for achievement by acting as mentors, teachers, or coaches (Bass, 1985). Followers feel that the leaders are treating them as individuals, not just part of a group. These leaders spend individual time with followers to develop their skills and personal strengths in the workplace. Results did not support IC as a significant predictor of employee engagement or turnover intention. However, bivariate correlation analyses indicated that IC was positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention.

It is likely that in general, fast food managers do not feel capable of mentoring employees because of the experience level of the managers, age discrepancies between leaders and followers, and time constraints (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

**Inspirational motivation.** Leaders who use IM while leading act in ways that foster meaningful and challenging work for followers (Bass, 1985). The leaders exude optimism about the future, which includes speaking enthusiastically about group members and their future goals, and they demonstrate confidence in the employees' ability to achieve these goals. Results did not support IM as a significant predictor of employee engagement or turnover intention. However, bivariate correlation analyses indicated that IM was positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention. IM requires that leaders be inspired and motivated personally, and have the ability, talent, willingness, and desire to inspire and motivate others (Bass & Bass, 2008). In relation to future goals and confidence in employees, the restaurant managers in the current study might have had difficulty seeing the employees' potential for upward mobility in the organization.

**Intellectual stimulation.** Leaders who manifest IS challenge followers to behave in innovative ways when problem solving and to reexamine critical assumptions in the workplace (Bass, 1985). These leaders encourage innovation by asking followers to look at situations from a variety of perspectives or vantage points in an effort to find new solutions to the same problems. Leaders who demonstrate IS contribute to the independence and autonomy of followers by engaging them in the problem-solving process (Bass & Bass, 2008). Results supported IS as a significant predictor of employee



engagement and turnover intention. In addition, bivariate correlation analyses indicated that IS was positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention.

From a theoretical perspective, when leaders use IS, they encourage employees to solve problems intellectually, which involves contemplating many options (Bass & Bass 2008). When working as a team, employees who are led by intellectually stimulating leaders stimulate each other, commonly referred to as brainstorming (Bass, 1998). These teams often become comfortable listening to each other's ideas, sharing new ideas with each other, viewing problems as opportunities to learn, and using collaborative decision making to resolve conflicts. Leaders who use IS present complex problems in ways that everyone can understand. Quickly getting to the crux of issues while others are still trying to identify the problems is a trait of intellectually stimulating leaders. Leaders who use IS are more effective when they are given the discretion from their seniors to explore new opportunities, diagnose organizational issues, and create new solutions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By stimulating followers intellectually, leaders increase their organizational commitment by educating them, listening to their concerns, and using their collective experiences to cope with problems in resourceful ways.

According to Bass (1998), a basic leadership development program increased IS from a mean of 2.53 to a mean of 2.91 if it was a clearly stated goal of the development plan. Organizations would do well to support policies that view IS as a normative feature for leaders to embody in their followers. Leaders who demonstrate IS use adaptive, creative, and thoughtful solutions to deal with stress. They do not use a more negative approach that might include belittling the followers and not helping them to find

solutions. Intellectually stimulating leaders work with conflicting parties to find solutions that resolve the issues expressed by both parties (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The issues are reframed into a common problem to be resolved together.

### **Transformational Leadership Related to Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention**

Employee engagement involves employees applying their cognitive, emotional, and physical skills in the workplace (Kahn, 1992). Engaged employees are likely to be described as attentive, focused, and connected to the mission and goals of the organization (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Employee engagement is strongly related to positive organizational outcomes, employees' commitment to the organization, and job satisfaction (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Employers who provide employees with opportunities for development, make employees feel valued, and demonstrate an interest in the well-being of employees have more engaged workers.

Turnover is a significant problem in the fast food industry, impacting the organization's financial status and employees' job role instability (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Fast food employees express less hesitation in leaving their jobs when they feel unfilled in their job role. Results of the present study were consistent with findings from the research literature indicating that fast food employees have a greater propensity for turnover intent, particularly when the transformational behaviors of managers are rated lower by subordinates. Results indicated that IS and employee age were significant predictors of turnover intention.

Results also indicated that the five transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IM, IS, and IC were positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention in the correlation analyses. This finding is consistent with the tenets of the transformational leadership model and its association with enhanced leadership effectiveness (Bass & Bass, 2008). The leaders who were rated as exhibiting transformational leadership behaviors were more likely to have engaged employees and employees with less intention to turnover. In a correlation, the relationship between an interval or scaled variables is being considered. In a regression model, the model is looking for the line of best fit using all variables, which means that the variables that are not contributing a significant amount of variance are excluded from the model, thus making those variables insignificant.

The only transformational leadership behavior in the current study that was significantly linked to employee engagement and turnover intent was IS. This finding has not been reproduced in the extant research. As a result of only this exploratory study, it would not be advisable to expect this finding to be consistent in future research; however, it is worth future research in the fast food industry to determine whether the ability of leaders to stimulate employees intellectually is linked to employees' level of engagement and their turnover intention. Perhaps focusing on training leaders to stimulate employees intellectually could have a positive effect on the long-term success of restaurants.

Not only was IS the only significant predictor of employee engagement and turnover intent with this sample of fast food employees but it also was the lowest rated behavior among the transformational leadership behavior of their managers. According to

Bass (1985), leaders who stimulate followers intellectually also challenge them in their work role by encouraging followers to find new solutions when problem solving, examine critical assumptions, and evaluate situations from a variety of standpoints.

IS is a core component of the inclusion of employees in the process of fostering follower development (Bass & Bass, 2008). Managers who stimulate followers intellectually engage them in solving problems in the workplace, a process that enhances their individual development and makes them feel that they are valued team members. Fast food managers lack the appropriate training to promote this quality in followers because they have been conditioned to respond to issues with quick fixes (Ng & Kelloff, 2013).

Historically, managers in the fast food industry have been known to address issues with quick and easy solutions that fail to address the root causes of problems and do not engage followers in the process (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Because the fast food leadership model lacks critical thinking about root issues, leaders who use this model fail to stimulate followers intellectually. Moreover, followers who need IS in the work environment might be less engaged because managers fail to include followers in the creative process by not asking them to reformulate problems that require solving (Bass & Bass, 2008).

IS might have been the only significant predictor because the fast food industry does not promote the use of creativity and innovation to solve problems (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). Followers might want leaders who encourage them to analyze their values and beliefs when working through possible solutions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By including

followers in the decision-making process, IS leaders develop followers who can act independently when working through problems for themselves. Finally, IS leaders are always thinking about new ways of viewing old issues in an effort to find solutions that may have been overlooked in the past.

The remaining predictors of IA, IB, IM, and IC were not found to be significant in the findings for employee engagement and turnover intent. In relation to IA, the findings suggest that fast food leaders are not presently behaving in ways that make followers be proud of their association with the leaders. In many cases, managers perform the same functions at stations throughout their fast food restaurants, so building respect from employees is challenging. This side-by-side working relationship might mean that employees see managers as peers, not seniors. The quality of the leadership displayed by fast food managers, possibly because they want to make themselves look good, might not be demonstrating a desire by the leaders to put the needs of team members over their own needs. It is possible that because of the hectic workplace environment, managers struggle to exhibit the power and confidence that followers want in leaders.

In regard to IB leaders, they might not be supporting and verbalizing a strong sense of purpose in their followers because they do not have a strong purpose themselves. Because of the pressures of senior leadership, restaurant managers in the fast food industry might be lacking the desire, skills, and depth to demonstrate such action. Leaders who show IB emphasize the importance of a collective sense of mission to the team.

IM leaders are the positive influence in the room and on the team. The fast food restaurant managers in the current study carried a more negative outlook of the future and

their confidence in the workforce. Instead of giving meaning to the work to be performed, the leaders of today's fast food restaurants display a pessimistic viewpoint about what should be accomplished by a successful fast food restaurant workforce.

IC was not found to be significant because the employees might not have been thinking about long-term plans. In the fast-paced fast food environment, restaurant managers likely do not feel that they have the time to coach and mentor individual employees. The limited growth potential and new learning opportunities in fast food restaurants could have limited the managers' ability to satisfy the employees' desire to develop their own personal strengths.

### **Practical Implications**

This study has practical implications. Because this study involved fast food employees, the practical implications discussed pertain only to the fast food industry. It is possible that other restaurants or food-based industries with hourly-wage workers might benefit or find value in the practical implications in this study. Other industries that have a similar organizational structure also might benefit.

First, it is critical that the fast food industry consider incorporating aspects of transformational leadership education into managerial training programs that support the management of employees and teams to improve organizational outcomes. Results of this study indicated that the current management training program in this franchise and the overall fast food industry focuses primarily on ways to run a station, such as attending the drive-thru, preparing vegetables, or building sandwiches in a fast food restaurant, and is not entirely effective from a transformational perspective and based on the findings

related to employee engagement and turnover intention. The management program at the franchise that the study focused on incorporates little to no leadership training for managers.

Second, results showed that the employees did not consider all transformational behaviors to be related to employee engagement and turnover intention. At a minimum, all restaurant managers and assistant managers should receive basic training on ways to use IS to increase employee engagement and decrease turnover intention. Teaching managers to build their teams around the transformational concept and behaviors of IS will help to achieve the goal of teams collaborating in creative ways to find solutions to problems (Bass, 1998).

Third, the more educated the managers are, the better equipped they will be to teach and coach their respective teams so that they are successful. By providing managers with resources that support IS, performance reviews, and other information that can help to identify areas for opportunity, the managers will better be able to lead their teams. By operating as a cohesive unit, teams can focus on goals and be much more effective than teams that are operating as individuals.

Lastly, leaders use IS to lead their teams increase productivity, and when restaurants are more productive, they benefit from a stronger bottom line. Financially strong organizations not only secure the futures of the organizations but also ensure higher salaries, more secure employment, and better benefits for employees.

### **Limitations of the Study**

I understand that by using a hierarchical regression model for research, more accurate statistical results are probable; however, at the beginning of this exploratory research, I thought using a stepwise regression was best suited for the study. It should be noted that three known matters of concern are presented with the use of stepwise regression methods in research (Lewis, 2007; Thompson, 1995). First, many of the stepwise software systems incorrectly indicate the number of statistical tests that the system has made to get to the resulting model; rather, the resulting degrees of freedom produced by the computer model are undercalculated, which can increase the likelihood of finding spurious statistical significance. Second, the identified set of best predictors based on a prespecified size does not always identify the best variable set. Third, the replicability of findings is limited or not possible because the findings rely on sampling error to formulate statistical conclusions. Also to note, using a stepwise regression causes the statistical significance levels to be inflated, which inflates the chances of Type I errors. Sampling error is a known issue with the use of stepwise methods or procedures; however, this is less problematic in larger sample sizes (Thompson, 1995). I did run a hierarchical regression and found that the same trends held true in the results.

One primary limitation of the study was the setting in which data collection occurred. Conducting the surveys within the restaurants might have led some respondents to engage in socially desirable response patterns. It was not possible for me to evaluate whether this situation occurred, but it was a distinct possibility. The study focused on hourly-wage, nonmanagement workers in the fast-food industry, thus limiting the



generalizability of the findings to other hourly-wage workers involved in restaurants or other food-based industries. I suggest that other restaurant groups, such as servers or waiters, hostesses, and others in food-related jobs, be considered for participation in future investigations of similar employee engagement and turnover issues.

This exploratory study involved the use of a stepwise regression analysis (Field, 2009). Stepwise regression analyses are typically not recommended for use in research because the models are derived by the computer using only mathematical criteria or calculations, both of which take significant methodological decisions out of the control of researchers. Stepwise methods also run this risk of overfitting or underfitting the model and can lead to Type II errors. However, because the nature of this study was exploratory, I believed that the stepwise method was the most appropriate approach to evaluate a new phenomenon.

### **Recommendations**

I recommend that future investigations replicate this study in other fast food restaurants to extend the generalizability of the results to more diverse samples using a hierarchical regression model. Other fast food restaurant chains within the industry could be considered for participation to determine if diversity exists in different types of restaurant chains. It is possible that fast food restaurants have unreliable training programs for managers that are not structured or implemented in a standard format across restaurants, leading to inconsistent outcomes regarding employee engagement and/or turnover intention. The implementation of structured leadership training programs for the managers of fast food restaurants could lead to changes in these same outcomes.

Future studies should focus on replicating this study by using a hierarchical regression analysis or other statistical techniques to evaluate relationships or differences in the outcomes. A hierarchical regression analysis would allow researchers to participate more in the methodological process by manually entering data in the order that they desire, as opposed to the stepwise approach, which does not allow researchers to have input. Because this study was exploratory, it can serve as the basis for future researchers to conduct their own studies. Future researchers also could consider other factors that might be influencing the regression model. Geographical location, level of education, familial financial background, local market conditions, and IA could be factors accounting for variances in the regression model that were not included in this study.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study has a number of potential positive social change implications. As discussed in Chapter 1, the fast food industry is weighed down with restaurant managers who prefer the “quick fix” style of leadership that leaves underlying problems unresolved. As a consequence, the same problems tend to be repeated, leaving managers in the ongoing role of dealing with the same problems one after another. When managers spend most of their time dealing with recurring problems, they have little other time to lead proactively and intentionally.

Managers who use a quick fix style of leadership might benefit from this study by learning about new styles of leadership, new behaviors to demonstrate, and possibly a new vocabulary. By understanding the different styles of leadership, restaurant managers will have clear choices regarding their preferred leadership styles. The five

transformational leadership behaviors of IA, IB, IS, IM, and IC are effective tools to use once leaders are educated in how to use them. Specifically, leaders who use IS will enrich the followers' life by helping them to see new ways of addressing problems (Bass, 1998). This new leadership method will encourage followers to challenge themselves to use their beliefs and values to think through new approaches to solve issues.

Creativity is what leaders who demonstrate IS teach, coach, train, and educate their followers to use when dealing with difficult situations. These same leaders also look to be innovative when they undertake new challenges and new projects. Although involving followers in the problem-solving process is a trait of leaders with IS, this involvement is only the first step in encouraging followers to think through and tackle problems without assistance. The results of this study will help to educate restaurant managers about the ways that leaders who use IS behave. They also might empower them to behave differently in different situations. Findings might give leaders a new vocabulary to use when working with subordinates in a way that will create real change, new ideas, and new angles from which the organization can solve problems.

Restaurant managers who choose to use transformational behaviors will make the work environment more pleasant, increase employee engagement, and reduce turnover intention. When employees are engaged, they are more productive, provide better service, work better with others, and remain in their jobs for a longer time. When employees perform at higher levels and provide better service, customers benefit. Happy customers are good for business because they become return customers. The result is a more stable business than can provide more stable employment for employees. The positive social

change becomes apparent when employees are happier at work and customers enjoy a better quality of service and products that strengthen the financial position of all stakeholders. Finally, this improved workplace atmosphere gives employees stable incomes and benefits, along with opportunities for advancement in the organization.

### **Conclusion**

Leadership is an important component in the management of employees. Results of this study found that all five transformational leadership behaviors were positively related to employee engagement and turnover intention. IS was the transformational leadership behavior that significantly predicted employee engagement and turnover intention among hourly-wage, nonmanagement employees in the fast food industry.

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## Appendix A: Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions.

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender? Circle One. M F
3. Approximately how many years have you worked under the current manager in your store location? List months if under one year.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Approximately how many years have you worked in the fast food industry? List months if under one year.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you worked at this company?  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Directions. Use the following rating scale to answer the questions to describe the leadership style of your general manager as you perceive it. Please answer all items on the answer sheet.

## MLQ (5-Item Sample)

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

The person I am rating...

1. Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.

0 1 2 3 4

2. Talks about his/her most important values or beliefs.

0 1 2 3 4

3. Talks optimistically about the future.

0 1 2 3 4

4. Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her.

0 1 2 3 4

5. Spends time teaching and coaching.

0 1 2 3 4

## Appendix C: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

Directions. The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have ever had this feeling, cross the “0” (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way based on each of the statements below.

Never 0	Almost never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Very often 5	Always 6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday

At my work, I feel bursting with energy.

I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

Time flies when I'm working.

At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.

I am enthusiastic about my job.

When I am working, I forget everything else around me.

My job inspires me.

When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.

I feel happy when I am working intensely.

I am proud on the work that I do.

I am immersed in my work.

I can continue working for very long periods at a time.

To me, my job is challenging.

I get carried away when I'm working.

At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.

It is difficult to detach myself from my job.

At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.

## Appendix D: Turnover Intentions Measure

Directions. Use the following rating scale to assess how you feel about your job.

Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

I often think about applying to a job elsewhere.

If I had different alternatives I would probably not work in the same place as now.

I have the best of all possible jobs.

After all I have been through it is not going to take much before I apply for a job somewhere else.

I will probably not stay at the same workplace until I reach retirement.

*Note.* Statements were rated on a 7-point scale, with higher numbers reflecting a stronger agreement (scale later reversed except for the test item “I have the best of all possible jobs”).